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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[THE TIGER IN LOVE.]

AFTER THREE YEARS.

BY THE

Author of "The Golden Apple," "Aspasia," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE arrival of Mrs. Cartwright gave Hester liberty to retire, and she was not sorry to make her escape. She did not go up to the suite allotted her. She had a nervous dread of Miss Barbara's cheery talk, and a strong yearning for solitude and the open air. There was a cosy, rustic chair under a rose-hung arbour, in the rear garden, which she had noticed and admired as she had examined the grounds that afternoon. Her thoughts turned towards it eagerly, and slipping through the rear hall, she passed out of its great doorway, and crossed the veranda and the garden, and gained the pretty retreat. But at the very threshold she paused and shrank back.

Lord Cuthbert was there, and she came so suddenly upon him that he could not prevent her seeing the weary, sorrowful expression of his face, nor hide the glistening tear upon his pale cheek. He bowed with ready deference, however.

"Come in, Miss Lloyd. Pray do not go."

She stood vibrating restlessly, and plucked at a rose spray.

"I shall not disturb you by my presence. I must go to look after some of the house matters. Pray enjoy the sweet quiet of my little arbour before the twilight fades into the darkness. It is a favourite haunt of mine, but I joyfully yield it up to a fairer, purer presence."

He passed her, as he spoke, and turned his face towards the house.

"I do not wish to drive you away," stammered Hester, feeling keenly how ungracious it would be in her to allow him to depart without a friendly word. "How odd it seems to have this abrupt change in our programme. I hope your housekeeper will not be indignant at so sudden an influx of visitors."

"Oh, no! She is a kindly woman, and is rather, I

believe, rejoicing in the unusual liveliness of the house. Hitherto she has been like a rose in a desert, all her wonderful capabilities quite lost to the world, entirely unappreciated. Now she will be likely to be satisfied of due appreciation."

She grasped again at the first thought which presented itself; anything to make a courteous, but indifferent speech.

"Mrs. Cartwright is a saintly woman. I think she brings a benediction with her presence which any house may well desire. How strange it is that you have Mrs. Cartwright and Kitty here under your roof to-night."

"How strange, indeed!" he echoed.
And she saw him lift one hand to brush his forehead, while he turned his face upward to the sky, and again she saw that wistful, pathetic, weary look in his eyes. For a moment she perceived he had forgotten her presence.

"Under my roof, both of them!" he murmured, and he sighed wofully.

Hester stood disconcerted. Why was he so sad and melancholy? She could not repress the soft womanly sympathy which stirred in her heart. What a strange contradiction she found in this man's character! Was it possible for one nature to hold such antagonistic qualities? She was asking herself these questions while she spoke aloud.

"It is very charming here at Lyle Hall. I was not aware the landscape was so fine."

He withdrew his absent eyes from the deepening sky.

"Yes, I believe people are usually pleased with it."

"That is only a half tribute. I am inclined to scold you for being unappreciative. A master ought to be enthusiastic and proud of these fine grounds, and of the grand old building," she chided, playfully.

"He ought—yes, he ought," said Cuthbert Lyle, grinding his feet into the velvety sod.

"And yet he is not—why are you so fastidious? Did the old palaces and stately cathedrals of foreign cities pervert your taste, Lord Cuthbert?"

"I hope not—nay, I am sure not, for now—to-day a simple cottage, woodbine-hung, looks fairer and more enviable than this old building, where so many generations of Lyles have lived—and died," he answered, a keen bitterness in his tone.

"Lord Cuthbert, you are an enigma!" exclaimed Miss Lloyd.

He smiled mournfully.

"An enigma whose solution Miss Lloyd will only look to find among the black and evil attributes of fallen humanity."

"Nay," she answered, hastily, "I try to be just."

"Perhaps you are; who knows?"

She lifted her head, the rosy colour stealing even to her forehead, but the eyes shining with the brave earnestness of her nature.

"Lord Cuthbert, I must confess that you have a fair and a dark side for my eyes. What I have seen and known of you, since you came to Honeysuckle Cottage, makes other things I have seen and known seem the more impossible, because they are so hideous."

"You did not credit my assertion concerning the letter," he answered, reproachfully.

"On the contrary, I rejoiced to believe your explanation; but it was not to that I referred."

She hesitated a moment, and the colour mounted higher, while her clear eyes drooped, but the voice went on firmly:

"Lord Cuthbert, I have heard poor Mrs. Brown's sad story; I have wept with her over her troubles. I have tried to cheer and help poor Mary."

Lord Cuthbert turned his face to her, the eyes full of inquiry and surprise. Was it possible for a man to wear such a perfect mask of innocence, she asked herself desperately. If he could be the guilty wretch she had believed him, and assume such thorough unconsciousness at poor Mary Brown's name, he must be the very arch-flound himself.

"Mrs. Brown's story! Is it anything which concerns me?" he asked.

What could she answer? She drew a long breath of desperate relief, when she saw Miss Barbara's trim figure hastily emerging through the shrubbery.

"Hester, Cuthbert! where are you all? Have you heard of Kitty's good fortune in the very midst of her ill fortune?"

"To be sure we have not. Pray let us hear about it," exclaimed Miss Lloyd, with rather more vivacity than was quite natural.

"It is very romantic; but thoroughly delightful. It seems the man came just after we left Mrs. Cartwright, and the dear mother arrived with her heart full of thanksgiving—and tender sorrow too, I believe; yearning, you know, after that noble son, whose loss she cannot forget—and she rightly judged it would be the best of panaceas for Kitty's pain. You ought to see the child, laughing and crying by turns, but her eyes shining like stars through both."

But Miss Barbara's voice gave way, and she was obliged to stop for breath.

Lord Cuthbert put her gently into the garden chair, and Hester exclaimed, laughingly:

"But you haven't told us what the good fortune is. I haven't seen you in such a flutter for a long time, Miss Barbara. What is Kitty's good fortune?"

"Why a fortune, a veritable fortune. I forgot just how many thousand pounds; but enough to make Kitty an heiress, and dear Mrs. Cartwright a person of consequence. It is glorious!"

"Explain, please," spoke up Lord Cuthbert, and his voice was husky.

"One Adam Cartwright, a great steel manufacturer in Wales, a cousin of Kitty's father, has just died without heirs, and has left a vast fortune, mostly to a son of James Cartwright, if there is such a son, if not, in equal portions to widow and daughter of the said cousin, who in his boyhood, it seems, served him some good turn. Strange to tell, neither Mrs. Cartwright nor Kitty knew a word of the man's existence. But there is the great fortune, actually theirs, waiting for their acceptance! Come in and congratulate them. Never were they more deserved, let the other case be what it may."

And once more in a little perturbation of joyous excitement, Miss Barbara rose, and pattered off towards the house. Miss Lloyd followed, but lingeringly, and she saw the hand of his lordship flung up in a passionate gesture against the darkening sky, and she caught his stifled cry in an anguished tone which thrilled and startled her.

"All in vain! the last consolation taken away. Oh, avenging heavens, the retribution is complete!"

She was sure she had not mistaken the wild words. She repeated them over again and again; but could make no meaning to them. After she had retired to her chamber for the night, and was left to solitude, she reviewed the interview in the arbour, she recalled every look and gesture of Lord Cuthbert's with a vague uneasiness, a secret consciousness of some baffling secret upon which she could not lay her hand. The disquietude of her thoughts prevented sleep, and wrapping a large mantle around her dressing-gown, just as the midnight was announced by the pealing echoes of the great hall clock, she stole down to Kitty's room, to ascertain how she was spending the night, and if her feverishness and pain had decreased beneath the doctor's medicine.

The dim light of the feebly burning jet in the hall chandelier scarcely illuminated the large hall, and it was only when she was close upon the door, that Miss Lloyd perceived the tall figure, with arms crossed over his breast, leaning in silence against the wall, like a sentinel on his guard.

She started back nervously.

"Lord Cuthbert?"

He bowed, and whispered, sadly:

"And so you also are sleepless? Rest easy about your friend. Her pain has yielded at last; she has been sleeping half-an-hour, I think."

"And you have taken no rest yourself? That is wrong, for I am sure you have undergone unusual fatigue to-day," she said, reproachfully; for the grave, sad face moved her to a compassionate solicitude that was nearer than she suspected to actual tenderness.

"I could not sleep. And I did not know but I might be of service, if the pain continued obdurate."

As he spoke, he moved farther from Kitty's door, nearer to the outer entrance. Hester Lloyd followed, and stood looking out, through the great squares of plate glass, at the shadowy foliage, and the clear, starlit sky.

"How peaceful!" she murmured, at length. "With our eyes fixed upward on the silent majesty of those unknown spheres, how small, and trivial, and unworthy seem the fretting cares, and empty vanities, and meaningless follies of this lower world!"

"Yes," responded he, in as dreary a voice, "it is soul to soul there—no empty trappings of title or estate, no arrogant pride—oh, what poor fools we mortals can be! What reckless squanderers of the most precious things, while stretching out our hands

for glittering vanities that are worse than useless—that turn and sting us!"

She saw the momentary spasm which shook the set lip from its firmness.

"I do not catch your meaning fully," she murmured.

"No, heaven grant you never may. In some things, Miss Lloyd, you have been hard, and unjust to me; but think your worst of me, as of one who has made a fatal and terrible mistake, and you cannot fall short of the reality."

"I am sorry," faltered Hester Lloyd, somehow compelled to speak out a conviction she had hardly dared glance upon hitherto; "for I have just begun to hope that I should find all my ill opinion of you baseless and unjust. I am sorry to hear you acknowledge that wrong lies at your hands."

"Wrong to myself," he returned, bitterly; "it has all come home to me. Like the Spartan's fox, it is under my own cloak and is eating—eating into my heart. I have cheated myself as the poor wretch invoked his own destruction when he asked that his touch might transform every object into gold. Fatal, fatal gift!"

His lip quivered, his eye expressed untold anguish. Miss Lloyd looked at him in perplexity and sorrow.

"Pardon me, Miss Lloyd; you have discovered me in an unusual mood, which has entirely routed all my self-command. I shall recover presently. I would not have you think me a whining boy, querulously complaining of unalterable facts. Since I have chosen a thorny path, I will do my best to tread it in a manly fashion. Only one thing I ask of you—you, the one woman in all the world who has wrested my heart from me—nay, do not be angry; I swear to you I know very well it is as useless to think of winning a single response from you, as of plucking down those stars yonder. But I only ask you to believe that your accusations are unjust. Heaven knows I have done wrong; but I alone suffer for it—that human being does not live who can come to me, and say: 'I am the worse, the more sinful, or degraded, or unhappy because of your deeds.' Do you believe me, Miss Lloyd? I promise you this subject, so odious and repulsive to you, shall not come up again between us; but this once will you gratify me enough to look into my eyes, and answer if you believe I have spoken the truth to you?"

Hester Lloyd lifted her eyes slowly, in obedience to this impetuous adjuration, and met those turned upon her in such wistful appeal.

He did not see the pink glow which crept over cheek and forehead, he did not guess the sudden flutter of dormant soul within that proud heart; but he smiled mournfully at the clear, steady tones of the low, sweet voice.

"I do believe you. It is all bewildering and puzzling, inexplicable almost, but I believe, Lord Cuthbert, that you have told me the truth."

"Do not call me Lord Cuthbert. Strip away the meaningless forms. Said not that under those stars it was soul to soul? I will never be mad enough to ask it again—but to-night, when the world looks so black and dreary to me, give me this morsel of comfort—say 'I believe that thou speakest the truth.' Can you, Miss Lloyd?"

"I believe thou speakest the truth," murmured Hester Lloyd's low, musical voice.

She caught only the echo of his vehement thanksgiving, for a swift revelation, like a lightning's dazzling stroke, had showed to her something in her heart which filled her with consternation, albeit there was also a dizzy joy, and she caught away her hand from his, and glided away into the dimness again, and presently he heard the rustle of her garments, and her light step on the stairs above him.

"So the ministering angels vanish!" muttered this hopeless lover, and returned to his vigil; but half its despair had fled, wherefore he could not tell.

CHAPTER XIX.

ZEPHYR, the famous ballet dancer, was at the height of her success, and of feverish happiness also. The gay public could hardly fail to be aware of the change. That rapt, wild, ethereal look had entirely vanished from her face. She came before them with sparkling eyes, and blushing cheeks, and lips perpetually dimpling into smiles, and was kindly and gracious to all, out of the overflowing happiness of her own heart. Every night there was the same little pantomime when the curtain rose, and revealed the fairy dancer. The bright eyes went swiftly to a certain private box, well understood now to belong to the Count Lubin, and at a glimpse of the dark face looking out from thence, Zephyr flushed, and sparkled, and overflowed with delight, like any fond and foolish woman. Singularly, she was not half so attractive now; the very charm which had been so peculiar, and so fascinating,

was lost now that the poor thing was happy and contented. Even the duke began to weary and grow indifferent. Zephyr did not perceive it, and if she had, would not have laid it to heart. So long as she received from Count Lubin's box the nightly bouquet, and found him waiting in her room when she arrived, with his fond smile and caressing words, she had no more to ask. The count, however, knew very well how the public mind, so fickle and unstable in its allegiance, was only waiting for the rising of some new star, to transfer its flattering homage. It had served his purpose well enough to allow the bouquet throwing to be somewhat conspicuous. It was a triumph, which London would be apt to remember, that the Count Lubin had gained favour where the duke failed; but he took care to be among the first absentees. Zephyr did not mind it so much, though it was disappointment to miss his bouquet, and the inspiration of his presence, so long as she received his private visits to her rooms. The wily deceiver took care that she should still be caressed with flattering words and treacherous caresses, and was very cautious to avoid every chance of arousing her suspicions of his good faith. He had come to be a privileged guest in her apartments, coming and going at his own pleasure, by means of the private keys she had given him. Her servants had long ago been made aware that the count and their mistress had met in other lands, and were near and dear friends. The count encouraged the seclusion in which she kept herself, and applauded her determination to make no English acquaintances.

He had not overcome Ion's antipathy, but he gave himself no concern about the lad, who was scarcely ever seen when he was there. Zephyr complained now and then, about the boy's sullen moods and strange ways, but was too much engrossed with the count to take it to heart. She did not even investigate the matter, and ascertain the object of his long absences, though she was made aware that every day for two, and three, and sometimes four hours the lad was missing. He had a hiding-place closer at hand than either Zephyr or the count suspected. In the dressing-room, which was the former's favourite sitting-room, there was a large, low-table, draped in pale, sea-green silk, with an overdress of lace. Ion had one day lifted up this screening flounce, and crawled beneath it. In his solitary, unchild-like play he had called himself an imprisoned king, and remained there, brooding over gloomy, morbid fancies. The entrance of his sister in eager conversation with the man he hated and feared, kept Ion a prisoner in truth. He remained, and listened to every word of the conversation. And after that day, whenever the count's latch-key was heard at the outer corridor door, the strange boy scrambled hastily for this retreat; and sometimes, when Count Lubin little suspected it, a sharp ear caught every word of the muttered thoughts with which he beguiled the solitary waiting for Zephyr's return from rehearsal.

It was thus, one day, that he flung down the newspaper he had been reading, with a sharp ejaculation.

"So, ho, my fair Hester!" exclaimed he; "the *Times* gives an explanation of your long delay. At Lord Cuthbert Lyle's with a party! That is a very different affair, my worthy merchant, a very different affair from spending a few days with two dear female friends. Hum—Lord Cuthbert Lyle,—'a young gentleman of brilliant prospects and unusual talents,' says the *Times*. I must make his lordship's acquaintance; I must look after this matter. I am not to be cheated out of my bride. I will not lose this peerless Hester—no, not though I peril fortune and life itself to win her: I will delay no longer. This little fool must be put out of my way, and then I shall boldly demand the fulfilment of the contract."

The voice in which he had spoken those words had been scarcely above a whisper; but, through the folds of the sea-green drapery which veiled the dressing-table, a glittering eye looked out upon him, and marked the ferocious glare of his, the deadly animosity of his smile, and the precocious child knew very well who was meant by "little fool," and he clenched his small hand wrathfully.

Zephyr came in, while yet the count was lost in a black reverie. She was looking tired, and perhaps a little annoyed, but the moment she perceived him her face brightened.

"So soon here, Pedro! I had not hoped to see you for two hours yet."

"Don't you know that I lose no time possible for me to spend here? Besides, I am going to be robbed of some of these pleasant hours. This ugly business of mine will take me out of London a few days, and I must make up for it when I can."

She came up to him and leaned fondly on his shoulder.

"Oh! would it were ended speedily, I am tired of this cold land. Pedro, Pedro, hurry, and take me back to Italy!"

"Tired of London," he repeated, lightly. "What

when London idolizes you so, and pours upon you such a golden shower? Ungrateful Zephyr!"

Her eyes flashed, and her red lip curled.

"Yes, I am tired of it, and, Pedro, I think London begins to tire of me. There were many empty seats to-night, and scarce a dozen bouquets. And I overheard in the manager's room, that a fair Austrian had been engaged to appear next month, Pedro: I shall not stay in London to be deserted; I shall not be asked to resign my crown! I dance this week for the last time here."

She laughed bitterly as she concluded. The count watched her curiously.

"So your eyes are not dazzled out of their keenness, Zephyr. Well done of you!" he said. "It is a lesson everybody learns sooner or later. We cannot always be fed on sugar-plums, nor expect the sunshine to stay with us for ever. One must 'make hay while the sun shines,' then snap the finger at storms. You have a generous harvest, laugh at theirickle adulation, Zephyr."

"Have I not always scorned it?" she returned impetuously. "I care for nothing but your love. Do you think you shall soon be able to take me away?"

"Very soon," he returned, composedly. "I am determined to push matters now. I am tired of delay. I will have no more of it. I will put away every obstacle in my path."

His eye flashed, and his lip drew down with a smile. The child, hiding under the dressing-table, read it aright, but the weak, infatuated woman hung upon him fondly.

"That is my brave Pedro! Oh, Pedro, sometimes when I picture the beautiful life we shall spend there—no more danger, poverty, or trouble—it seems too beautiful to be true. And yet it is a fitting ending to such eventful lives. Only to think of the changes we have known, Pedro; I can scarcely realize it, when I reflect upon it. The grinding tyranny, the bitter poverty, those horrible years of prison life—"

"But to end in the luxurious life of Count Lubin—Count Lubin, moving freely among the noble ones of earth, surrounded with luxury, and proudest of all of his peerless bride."

She read the earnestness of the sparkling eyes—how should she guess he was thinking of anyone but Zephyr?—and she smiled with him.

"Let it come soon, Pedro—"

"Aye," he responded, with grim emphasis, "it shall come very soon. And if you miss me for a little while, you must not marvel, but understand that I am about this business, and bringing forward its swift consummation."

"I would not fret over it. If it is not easily compassed, let it go. Why not be content with what I have now? Once upon a time we should have thought it a great fortune."

"Yes, for a poor outcast, but you forget that I am a count now. And you, too, have learned to demand expensive luxuries. No, I cannot forego it. I must compass my ends."

He took leave a little after, and Zephyr went away to her chamber. When the room was clear, there was a rustle and waving among the sea-green drapery, and Ion crept out.

He swooped down upon the newspaper lying in a crumpled heap on the carpet, and spreading it out on the floor, went over it carefully, spelling out many words and examining every paragraph with painful solicitude. He hated English, but he had been obliged to study with his sister, and had been of much assistance to her, catching, with a child's ready adaptation, the words and meaning of the talk he heard in the streets, and using it for his own improvement. He found what he sought at last, and read it over half-a-dozen times, fixing all the names firmly in his memory. The paragraph was among the fashionable items:

"We understand that his lordship, the talented young master of Lyle Hall, is entertaining a very select but brilliant party at his charming home. Among Lord Cuthbert's guests rumour speaks of a new star, a young lady recently come in possession of a large fortune, who is quite unknown as yet, to our fashionable world, but is reputed to be as charming and beautiful as she is youthful and original in character. She has been a close friend of Miss Hester Lloyd's, which statement is almost equal to a patent of nobility, also of Miss Evesham of Honey-suckle Cottage. Miss Lloyd and Miss Evesham are also guests of Lord Cuthbert Lyle's, who is remarkably fortunate in securing such a galaxy of shining lights."

"Hester Lloyd, that is the name," muttered Ion. "I do not hate her, I am sure. She will be one very good friend to me if she will take Pedro away. If I can, I will find the lady."

That same paragraph in the *Times* found its way to Lyle Hall. Hester Lloyd read it first, and bit

her scarlet lip angrily, then she tossed it over to Kitty.

"There, Kitty, behold the penalty of riches! You are no longer safe in your peaceful seclusion. They will ferret out all your doings now, and chronicle the simplest for the admiring eyes of the gaping crowd. I hope you appreciate the compliments so delicately insinuated."

Kitty only laughed. She had none of Miss Lloyd's haughty resentment of vulgar espionage.

"Charming and beautiful! Dear, dear, what a wonderful thing a fortune is! It has already changed me into a heroine. Well, Hester, I think I shall bear it with fortitude. Why, how angry you look!"

"How can I help it? It is intensely annoying to have one's movements chronicled in that fashion. It is bad enough that the royal family cannot move except with the accompaniment of public bulletins. Why must they assail lesser lights? Who could have carried the story to London?"

"Not Lord Cuthbert, you may be sure," interposed Miss Barbara, who had taken up the paper as Kitty laid it down. "He will be as vexed as you are. I think I mistrust the source of mischief. That lawyer and his clerk who came out to settle up the business with Mrs. Cartwright. Of course they must carry back their precious bit of gossip. Never mind, Hester, no one ever yet managed to escape public talk who was of any account. You surely wouldn't abdicate a throne, because thereby you exemplified the old adage, that 'a cat may look upon a queen!'"

They all united in a chorus of merry laughter, though Miss Lloyd's forehead did not clear.

"My father will read it, and I am ashamed to say it will give him the first intimation of my change of quarters," she said.

"You have written him from here?"

"No, I have waited to decide the matter. Perhaps you haven't known that I have been vacillating to and fro, more than a dozen times on the point of taking my leave, since you and Mrs. Cartwright have so coolly decided to keep the whole party at Lyle Hall."

Miss Barbara had the faintest possible smile hovering about the corners of her mouth, but she said nothing. Kitty hastened to her mother's defence.

"My mother acquiesced in Miss Barbara's opinion that it would be ungenerous not to accept Lord Cuthbert's preferred assistance in arranging the business details, and she agreed with him, that it was as well for us to remain where accident brought us, until we secure a home of our own, suited to our new circumstances. She thought rightly that coming out under wing of dear Miss Evesham and your friendship was a grand thing for me. She could not see any impropriety."

"Certainly not," pronounced Miss Barbara.

"Oh, no, I do not suggest such an idea," replied Hester. "Your mother trusts Lord Cuthbert to manage everything. He told me this morning he was going to look at an estate which is for sale, on her account. She must place implicit confidence in him."

"She does—and yet there is something odd in her way with him. Sometimes she has an authoritative and again a rebuking manner, which I am sure if I were he I should resent. I told her so this morning, but she only kissed me, and sighed. And I knew by that, that she was thinking of Ross, and giving Lord Cuthbert his place."

"There is Lord Cuthbert coming up the avenue on King John. He has galloped hard, by the poor animal's reeking flanks. Ah, there is a phantom behind. Why, Hester, it is your father, I am certain! Come and see!" exclaimed Miss Barbara, from the window.

With a little cry of surprise and pleasure, Hester darted to the window.

"It is—it really is papa! That absurd paragraph has brought him down, I am sure. Who is with him? It is a face I have never seen—it is a face I do not like. I wonder how papa came with him?" she articulated with difficulty.

"They are both coming in with Lord Cuthbert; your curiosity will not long remain ungratified."

"I hope I can see papa alone. He does not look as his letters represented him to be," murmured Hester Lloyd uneasily, fancying that it was this conviction which sent such a cold shudder through her frame, and such a vague impression of impending evil to her heart.

She went into the dressing-room slowly, and stood there, idly smoothing her hair, waiting for the unusual mood to pass away; and then, when the summons to the drawing-room came, she went down with her own stately manner, disappointed a little that her father did not meet her outside the door, but smiling brightly upon him as she entered.

"Was it her fancy, or were the hands he stretched out to her cold, and trembling as from pain?"

"Hester, my daughter."

"My dear, dear papa."

Two pair of eyes watched their tender meeting wistfully; Lord Cuthbert grave and sorrowful, the Count Lubin gloating already in anticipated possession of the high-spirited and peerless creature.

She hung upon his shoulders with all a daughter's fondness, secretly searching over his face, and dismayed by the new lines of care imprinted there, quite oblivious of other presence. Lawrence Lloyd himself forgot, for the moment, everything except the gladness and joy of beholding his darling again.

How he had longed and hungered for those tender caresses, for the smiling glance of the eyes which truly made his sunshine! his own beautiful child! His heart swelled with blissful pride in her loveliness and goodness.

The Count Lubin coughed.

Lawrence Lloyd started. Again she felt the fluttering tremor of his hands, and looked wonderingly into the face where a cold shadow had fallen.

"My dear Hester, let me introduce you to my friend, Count Lubin. I was foolish enough to forget everything but the pleasure of finding you."

The gentleman was attired with extreme elegance, and in perfect taste. He had a fine figure, white, well-formed hands, and not unpleasing features, but there was something in the glittering eye, the showy smile, which made Hester Lloyd recoil with distaste and fear. She bowed lightly, murmured some inarticulate sentence, and turned back to her father, without having given the count so much as the tips of her lily fingers.

The Count Lubin flashed one fiery glance after her, and quivered a moment at his mustached lip, but he gave no farther signs of his displeasure.

He turned to Lord Cuthbert, and began conversing, certainly in a brilliant and impressive manner.

The merchant had understood the little wordless skirmish, and he glanced deprecatingly into his daughter's face.

"You told me you were happy and content, naughty papa, you have been cheating me," she said reproachfully.

"No, I am a little tired; we have ridden swiftly and without any pause, that is all," he replied, and dropped his eyes.

"I have ordered refreshment, Mr. Lloyd. I wish you and your friend would honour me by remaining and joining our party," said Lord Cuthbert, with sincere courtesy, "if only for a few days."

"Upon my word, that would be delightful," answered Count Lubin; "we'll accept, won't we, Lloyd?"

Miss Lloyd arched her haughty neck, and turned around upon the speaker with indignant eyes. Who was this man who dared to speak in that free-and-easy manner to the dignified merchant?

"Perhaps we will, count," returned Mr. Lloyd, hesitatingly.

"Of course we will. It is too charming an experience to decline. One can judge by your radiant look, Miss Lloyd, how much enjoyment is to be found in this charming Lyle Hall. It is an experience I should be sorry to lose. Is that a chestnut grove yonder, Lord Cuthbert?"

"Yes, and it is a wood of which the Lyles have been very proud. Will you come and look at the trees a moment? We shall return in season for luncheon."

The count glanced hesitatingly at the merchant, and then rose with a smile of gracious acquiescence. He had penetrated Lord Cuthbert's kindly wish to give the father and daughter a little time for private talk, and concluded that his own interests would be served by the same proceeding.

The moment they had gone, Hester turned in her imperious, abrupt fashion.

"Who is this man, papa?"

"I have told you, dear,—Count Lubin, a German. He is attracting a great deal of interest in London now, and is liked immensely. I wonder you have not heard of him."

"I do not like him," replied she with energy: "his presence oppresses me. I have the feeling that some slimy serpent is crawling under the fairest flowers, some cruel hawk ready to pounce down upon an innocent dove. Don't let him stay with you!"

He roused himself at this.

"My dear Hester, now you are unreasonable. What do you know against the count? If you have any proof of his misconduct or unworthiness that is another thing. But if not, you cannot blame me for reproving you for indulging an idle whim, a meaningless impression."

He spoke hastily, with a little bitterness in the tone.

She was surprised, and a little pained. It was growing upon her to perceive the change in him.

"Well, surely, papa, the odious man shall not be the cause of quarrel now we have met. Do you tell me that you are really well?"

"Quite well, my child."

"Nevertheless, I think I shall go home with you."

she said, quietly. "You have grown thin and worn in my absence. I shall take care not to leave you again."

He did not look the pleasure she expected.

"I don't know. I fancy the count wished to stay here," he faltered.

"Very well, let him stay if Lord Cuthbert likes; but that need not bind you and me, papa."

How pleased and amused he had been once at her imperious ways and cool commands!

But now he sighed, and answered doubtfully:

"I will see what is best, Hester. The count is my guest for the time being, and courtesy requires me to consult his wishes."

Her eyes searched into his so keenly, that he dropped his eyelids to conceal from her the shuddering heart beneath.

"Well," said she at length, and could not tell why she was more and more chilled.

He tried to bring back the accustomed cheery freedom of manner.

"And now, what have you to tell me? I learned through the *Times* of your change of quarters. Is it your friend Kitty who has met with such a golden smile of fortune? I am sure I rejoice in her prosperity."

"Yes, it is Kitty. She is hardly able to walk yet. You must come in and see her, and Miss Barbara is there too, and dear Mrs. Cartwright, who bears her new fortune with the same saintly calmness that glorified her affliction. Come, papa, come in now, before that count returns."

And at that name she instinctively shrugged her shoulders.

He saw it, and took both hands in his, and for the first time in her remembrance spoke sternly to her.

"Hester, I will not submit to a girl's idle whims. You will make me blush in shame for my foolish indulgence of your self-will and pride. You know no harm of Count Lubin. You shall not treat him with that insolent indifference, which is more stinging than downright insult. I command you, as my daughter, to be kindly and friendly towards him."

The proud girl flushed to her very temples; but she bent her head meekly.

"My father, from you I can bear commands, even in such a tone as that. You need not fear my rebellion."

Lawrence Lloyd bent down and kissed her, murmuring incoherently:

"That is my good and dutiful daughter! I would ask nothing—oh, I would ask nothing if it was not for your good—to save—worse—"

She read the hidden agony in his convulsed countenance; but she made no answer, only drew him away into Kitty's room. It was a relief to them both to hear Miss Barbara's cheerful prattle, and Kitty's girlish talk. Hester left him growing bright and cheery again, and stole away for a moment's solitude.

She stood at a window, with both hand pressed hard against her breast. What was this icy terror taking possession of her heart? It seemed, for a little, that she should never master it; but the sight of Lord Cuthbert escorting his unexpected guest up the walk, came like an electric shock.

"How absurd I am! What possible harm can he do me? And is not my honourable, upright father a safe guide for his daughter? This man has been of some service to him—possibly can execute some delicate business affair if propitiated, and my father wishes me to deal courteously with him. It is churlish in me to demur."

And she smiled once more in calm pride, and returned to the drawing-room. When Mr. Lloyd entered with Miss Barbara, in response to the summons to luncheon, he found his daughter conversing brilliantly; not precisely addressing Count Lubin, but answering many of his observations.

The latter was in most exuberant spirits, and the merchant drew a long sigh of relief, and smiled gratefully upon Hester. Count Lubin smiled also, and even she became aware that there was something dazzling and fascinating about the man.

Lord Cuthbert disappeared a moment, to return wheeling Kitty's divan into their circle, followed by Mrs. Cartwright, whose saintly face held a new expression of nervous unrest. Kitty had fretted over it, but had followed Miss Barbara's advice, and refrained from vexing her mother with idle enquiries.

After luncheon they gathered in the music-room, and Hester played and sang to them.

The count stood like one entranced, admiring—not, alas! the wondrous harmony of voice and instrument, but the imperial grace and loveliness of the fair performer.

Hester, rising at length when Lord Cuthbert exclaimed, against farther imposition, met the count's eye once more, and again her heart sank in deadly terror. Who was this man? and what was in his thoughts? She bit her lip until it pained her, when

she saw him lay his hand on her father's shoulder, and speak in careless fashion something which made Lawrence Lloyd glance uneasily in her direction, and then drop his eyes with a new look—surely it meant only humiliation and pain—did she live to read such a meaning from those beloved features?

But the count certainly made a brilliant appearance. The man's adaptation and versatility were truly wonderful. He talked well on many difficult subjects, and both Kitty and Miss Evesham thought him a very agreeable and gentlemanly person, and were by no means displeased to learn that he was to remain with Mr. Lloyd for a few days.

Lord Cuthbert had received an antagonistic impression; but he gave little heed to the matter, being fully occupied with his hospitable duties.

He found time to speak aside to Mrs. Cartwright.

"I have entered into negotiations for the place, and shall have the refusal for three weeks. In that time Miss Cartwright will be able to accompany you to examine the premises. I met the lawyer also, and agreed that you should be ready to sign the receipts to-morrow. A cash payment is already waiting your acceptance," he said.

He spoke rather swiftly. Mrs. Cartwright had noticed before that he always hurried his speech when addressing her, thinly concealing some nervousness or agitation. She was not, therefore, surprised now.

She smiled thoughtfully as she replied:

"I shall be glad to have tangible proof of this good fortune. It will hardly then seem so much like a dream from which I am to awaken presently. The first use I shall make of gold will be to repay to the Lyle coffers the sum they have generously contributed to our support. You understand, of course, that the annuity is to be paid to us no longer?"

"I expected it," answered Lord Cuthbert in a low voice, which was full of pain; "but I confess I am not prepared that what has already been paid is to be returned. I would very much rather it should not come back."

"And I cannot rest until it is done," returned Mrs. Cartwright, firmly.

He sighed drearily, and yet with a certain patient resignation which said as plainly as words,—"I expected it. There is not the smallest morsel of consolation left for me, and there is nothing for me to do but to endure in silence."

Mrs. Cartwright looked at the downcast face with wistful eyes.

"I do not wish to seem ungrateful," she said, "but there has always been a certain disagreeable impression accompanying that annuity. It was as if it said, 'This money makes good your son's loss.' It may be I was wrong to so interpret it, but I always took it so, and my heart all the while rebelled, because—because—though we had been grovelling in poverty of the bitterest kind, it would never have atoned—not the most princely fortune, nor for one single moment—for the loss of my son."

She spoke with unusual vehemence, a sharp passion in her voice.

Lord Cuthbert turned, as if compelled by the magnetism of her eyes, to confront her.

She half extended her hands, her face was full of wild yearning—rude doubt, and passionate tenderness.

"No—no," repeated she solemnly, "nothing, nothing, in the wide world will atone to me for the loss of my son."

His lordship grew deadly pale, his lips quivered, and for a moment it seemed that some fiery speech was hovering over them. But the next, he dashed his hand across his eyes, bowed hastily, and fairly ran away, and left her.

When he entered the drawing-room again, Count Lubin was telling a story which he had heard that morning.

"Such a queer thing. It seems that Colonel Higgins has just received a letter from Switzerland, from Geneva, where they have quite a sensation. A man has just come to life, an Englishman who was drowned, whom everybody has believed dead for two or three years. It seems he was thrown out of a boat on the lake and drifted senseless to the farther bank, and through some queer happening, taken senseless to an old convent, where he lay nobody knows how long in a brain fever. Now, it seems he has revived, and come to life, and finds everything queer and odd, but won't explain to people half that mystifies them. The man was a secretary, I think; companion to some young English nobleman, which accounts for his marketing, and returned with whatever she had purchased. She, however, walked almost doubled, and had the appearance, we are told, of a sheep or a dog as she moved along the road, a horse having on one occasion leaped over her. Her husband, who died many years ago at an advanced age, was a labourer on the roads. She herself was a native of the Principality, and wore the little Welsh cap and other dress which in past generations distinguished the Cambrian women."

Mrs. Cartwright's face was marily white, but not paler than that of the youthful master of Lyle Hall. He seemed like a statue, frozen there upon the threshold, where he had paused transfixed at the commencement of the count's story.

The one face reflected to the other, a wild terror—a desperate horror.

Yet Kitty saw nothing, and repeated again with a sob of transport:

"It is Ross,—our own Ross! Oh, Heaven be praised!"

(To be continued.)

CHIMNEY SWEEPING EXTRAORDINARY.—The Amsterdam Soot Company is the name of an association of chimney sweeps in Amsterdam, Holland. The director has the title of the "Royal Chimney Engineer." The managing agent is a distinguished advocate. The company have also a set of commissioners designated by the government, comprising an inspector of public works, a great diamond merchant, already president of one industrial association, and architectural engineer, who is also a manufacturer. The company has for its business the sweeping of chimneys and trade in soot.

A DISPUTED WILL.—It will be remembered that the late Mr. Moreton, solicitor, of Liverpool, left the whole of his large fortune to Dr. Goss, the Roman Catholic bishop of Liverpool. Dr. Goss and the widow were in dispute about the will, but a third party has now stepped in, and Dr. Goss and Mrs. Moreton are not unlikely to see the property for which they are contending handed over to her Majesty's representatives. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, we understand, now contests the will and claims the entire freehold estate for her Majesty in default of an heir-at-law. The case therefore stands thus: should the will be set aside, as it seems not at all improbable that it will be, the Crown will be entitled to take the whole of the freehold and one-half of the personal estate, and to have the other half of the personal estate applied, as far as it will go, to the payment of the mortgages on the freehold, which amount to more than the personality.

THE USE OF BIRDS AND WORMS.—Worms and birds are great friends to grass-turf. Where there are plenty of blackbirds and thrushes you will generally find the grass to thrive. No doubt the reason is that these cheerful creatures, like other cheerful creatures, have a desire to be useful. They know we cannot live upon song, and they cannot live by singing, for no one ever thinks of paying them for their merry minstrelsy; so they work for their crust and in the grass find wire-worms, slugs, snails, and leather-jackets; the last-named being the destructive grub of the "Daddy Long-legs," the most outrageous destroyer of grass in the world. As to earth-worms, if you drive them out of your lawn, you must expect the grass to die. They are the cultivators of it. For any other crop we dig and manure constantly. For grass, we, as a rule, do neither. But we cut down a crop every now and then and carry it away. Now the worms dig and manure; that is to say, they bore holes and throw up comminuted soil in little heaps, and in time will reverse the order of all the particles of the top crust.

DREADFUL DEATH OF A CENTENARIAN.—Mr. Wasbrough, coroner, held an inquest at the Royal Infirmary, on the body of Rachel Jones, 107 years of age. From the evidence of James Foley, a great-grandson of the deceased, it would appear that on Tuesday, the 18th of May, she was getting out of bed in the kitchen, when her night-dress caught fire. A great-granddaughter, who was present, screamed out "Grandmother is in flames!" when witness ran downstairs, procured a blanket, and wrapped the deceased in it. She wished to be at once conveyed to the infirmary. She was conveyed to that institution, where she lingered until death put an end to her sufferings. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned. We are informed by the Rev. Henry Richards, the late Incumbent of Horfield, that in the year 1837, Rachel Jones was confirmed by Bishop Monk. She then stated her years to be 75, and Mr. Richards informs us that she looked quite that age. She was noticed by the bishop who confirmed her, and who remarked upon the fact that one between threescore and ten and fourscore years was amongst those whom he had that day confirmed. Until two or three years ago the old woman would regularly go into Bristol for her marketing, and returned with whatever she had purchased. She, however, walked almost doubled, and had the appearance, we are told, of a sheep or a dog as she moved along the road, a horse having on one occasion leaped over her. Her husband, who died many years ago at an advanced age, was a labourer on the roads. She herself was a native of the Principality, and wore the little Welsh cap and other dress which in past generations distinguished the Cambrian women.



[THE MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE.]

THE RIVAL SISTERS.

CHAPTER X.

The elegantly-appointed, and extensive salons of Mr. Le Thorie, were one blaze of sparkling light, which reflected its soft rays upon a scene varied and brilliant, and which might have well compared with the court of the Merry Monarch in its most joyous period.

Moving to and fro under the festooned arches, traversing the raised balconies at either end, standing under the silver light of the chandeliers, or resting a moment in the numerous recesses and alcoves that dotted the great wide halls, were couples and groups of finely, and grotesquely attired ladies and gentlemen, who peeped from beneath their masks upon the gay scene, or laughed heartily at the jests of some Merry Andrew.

There, leaning against an ornamental pillar, his crooked body loaded with velvets and jewels, stands King Richard the Third, and near to him, her eyes flashing anger, is Queen Margaret, upbraiding him in no gentle terms; while in close proximity, shaking with laughter, and affording an excellent contrast, is portly Falstaff, listening to the merry tales of Young Prince Hal.

Standing under a chandelier, the scintillating beams giving a keener brightness to his restless eyes, appears the rapacious Shylock, now and then stroking his gray beard, and talking to Antonio, who with head down, sadly listens, while upon a balcony above is Portia, attired as a doctor of law, and gazing upon them with a significant smile.

In an alcove, with one jewelled arm resting upon the table at her side, and her long golden hair puffed in front, sweeping from her temples in rich bands, coiled high at the back, and falling o'er her shoulders in glistening ringlets, sat Louise Leigh, costumed as a German peasant girl.

Never did she look more lovely than as she sat thus, her head slightly inclined to one side, and her bosom gently rising and falling beneath the silken bodice; while below the flounced skirt peeped forth her slender and shapely feet, encased in boots of delicate kid. Now and then she glanced quickly around, as if expecting someone, while her large eyes sparkled brilliantly under the streams of resplendent light, which bathed the decorated apartment in an amber glow. Anon, other emotions possessed her, and her features assumed an expression of hope, slightly tinged with fear, while into the lustrous orbs came a mellow, subdued light.

Presently the sound of the clarion echoed in ringing peals through the vast saloon, and with it, hurrying from all quarters, came "belted knights," and "sturdy esquires," to claim the hands of their fair partners in the dance.

Now a more anxious look filled the blue eyes, and they glanced uneasily about, vainly endeavouring to discern the form of him whose image was stamped upon her mind, and engraved upon her heart.

While thus absorbed in her efforts to perceive the desired one, a voice sounded upon her ear, conveying these words:

"Beauteous child of the mountain, fairer than the lilies which nestle at its side, wilt thou deign to favour me with thy hand?"

She turned, and beheld the aged face of King Lear, smiling as in youth upon her. With a light laugh she responded:

"Forgive me, sire, but thy words are younger than thy looks, and smoother than thy cheeks, and pity 'tis that comeliness of person, as well as language did not unite thee."

"Beshrew me, fair maid, but thou art pert and gibbering thy tongue. Thy words and looks may well chime, for both are bright."

The echo of his last words had hardly died away, ere a vivid flush rose to the cheeks of Louise, and a happy gleam shone from her eye. An instant more and Charles de Moor knelt at her feet, and murmured:

"Angel of the mountain, wilt thou accept the escort of the Robber Chief?"

"Aye, and more than gladly."

King Lear gazed upon her in amazement and anger.

"What!" he cried, "fades England's royal king at the sight of an outlaw?"

"Strong hearts boiling for liberty, strong hands willing to battle for it, are the sons of my fatherland, which must ever rise above the showy, shallow power of Britain's rule!" and with these words Louise accepted her companion's arm, and moved forward to form for the Lancers.

Now that the defence of the assumed character was over, her real situation returned to her mind. She was at his side, he whom she loved, and it gave her pleasure, yet pain. She could not but know that his action in seeking gaiety, was only an attempt to forget his sorrow. Indeed, his very mien, his gait, and the trembling of his hands at intervals, assured her of it.

She said but little, fearing that he would recognise her voice. He replied in cold and constrained monosyllables.

The dance finished, he conducted her to a seat

bowed, and withdrew. As she saw him disappear among the gay throng, she felt a quiver of sadness, a pallor overspread her features, and a sigh escaped her, as she thought of her suffering sister. For the moment, she almost relented; then as she felt how dear he was to her above all earthly things, her composure returned, and she silenced her qualms of conscience, by thinking of the strength and fervour of her own love.

Slowly to her the evening wore away, for Paul Hamlin had not been at her side since the first dance. Indeed she had not seen him at all since then, and wondering why he was thus absent, and hoping to meet him in some balcony or alcove, she arose, and walked forward to the central portion of the hall.

In an ante-room at the end of the second balcony, and adjoining the *café*, were a group of jovial young men, seated around a dessert-table, which was loaded with wine and delicacies.

In the centre, with his mask at his side, sat Paul Hamlin, his face flushed with excitement, and his eyes brightly beaming.

Hither he had repaired, in the vain attempt to drown the agony of his thoughts by mirth. Not finding much consolation or forgetfulness in the jests and laughter that sounded upon his ear, and his feelings becoming more bitter at every moment, he at last, in a fit of desperation, and contrary to his general habits, indulged freely in wine.

As the generous liquid sent the blood more quickly through his veins, producing a light happiness and pleasant carelessness, he gradually forgot his sorrows, and entered with hearty spirit into the revel, which as it increased, seemed to imbue him with a sort of recklessness, which changed every care to gladness, every pain to pleasure.

"Paul, you look sad!" exclaimed young Clifton, derisively.

"Yes, he's thinking of some 'ladye faire!'" added another.

"Ha, ha!" laughed Paul, mockingly, "do you take me for a schoolboy, or a *pétit maître*?"

"Neither, my friend," rejoined Clifton; "but if you can withstand such beauty as you were fortunate enough to have for your partner in the Lancers, why then you have a heart harder than mine."

"A heart!" echoed Paul, rising in his seat, and holding his glass aloft, while the champagne reflected a thousand amber sparkles through its crystal sides. "I have none, except for this bright liquid, in which there is no treachery!"

"He has been jilted—my life on it!" shouted a merry young fellow.

"Your life on it!" thundered Paul, angered by the

words. "Be more careful in your speech, lest I take you at your word."

The other arose with flashing eye, when, seeing that conflict was imminent, Clifton conciliatingly said :

"Merely a jest, gentlemen; do not mar our pleasure; remember, we are all here for good fellowship!"

"Yes, yes!" added another, "let us have harmony; and to satisfy you both, we will drink to your speedy enthrallment by Cupid, and you will probably soon be sighing:

Light is my heart since the day we were plighted, Red is my cheek, that they told me was blighted, The green of the trees looks far greener than ever And the linnets are singing, "True loves don't sever!"

"Excellent!" exclaimed young Howard. "Now, gentlemen, with such music as that you cannot fail to be reconciled and shake hands."

Paul looked at his late antagonist, and smiled; then with that willingness to atoms which always succeeded his impulse, he arose, and extending his hand, remarked :

"Let us be friends, Rivere."

"Gladly," the young man replied, and they clasped hands, over the table, while the company looked on approvingly.

"That shows a proper feeling," said Grey. "I am glad that both of you possess a forgiving spirit."

"So am I," remarked Clifton; "but do you know, gentleman, that stanza gave me an idea."

"What is it?" queried several voices in chorus.

"A mock marriage."

Each looked at the other in astonishment, while some at once began to ridicule the proposition.

At last Howard observed :

"Will you be a little more explicit, Clifton?"

"I will," answered the gentleman addressed, "Know then, that I propose a mock marriage; we to draw lots to ascertain which of us shall enact the rôle of bridegroom. It will be a novelty at least, and doubtless productive of enjoyment."

"I like the idea," rejoined Rivere; "but where can we procure a lady?"

"A fine question to ask," laughed Grey; "there are a hundred ladies in the saloon!"

"The objection being eradicated," he resumed, "where is our minister?"

"Why, friend Hale is a lawyer; he will act for us," returned Howard.

"He is a little too good," remarked Sherwood; "for he is also a justice of the peace; he may make it bona fide."

"Nonsense!" cried a half-dozen voices, simultaneously, "it's only a joke."

"All depends upon who the bridegroom is, whether I comply or not," said Hale.

"We will venture, at all hazards, and if one of us is married, it will save a supper, for we have it here!" exclaimed Rivere.

After the laughter which this remark had caused subsided, Clifton observed :

"Now that you have done away with all opposition, we will proceed to business."

And he rang the bell.

Presently a waiter appeared.

"Bring a pack of cards," commanded Clifton, "remove forty-two of them, leaving only one ace in those remaining—shuffle those, and bring them here for us to draw from."

"Very well, sir," and he disappeared.

"You understand, gentlemen," resumed Clifton, "the one who draws the ace is to be bridegroom."

All signified their assent, and at that moment the attendant re-entered. Advancing to the table, he held the salver before each gentleman, and allowed them to abstract a card in rotation.

With each moment the interest of the party increased, and they gazed anxiously from one to the other as the cards were drawn and turned down.

All being supplied, the order was given to invert them. With peculiar feelings, all raised their cards. In a moment a shout rent the air, and was heard far out in the hall, for Paul Hamlin had drawn the ace.

"Caught at last," Clifton merrily exclaimed, "you are doomed by Cupid, for slighting Venus for Bacchus."

Paul smiled ironically.

"I will go through with the farce for your pleasure, gentlemen."

"The lady—the lady!" shouted Sherwood, "Hamlin's wife *nolens volens!*"

"Let it be the first lady you meet, Grey, as you leave the room," continued Clifton.

Within a few steps of the door stood Louise Leigh, with pale face and quivering heart. She had heard the previous words, and a strange desire welled up in her heart to stand at Paul Hamlin's side, and at least hear the words repeated, if even in jest. In an instant she heard a quick step inside, and hastily turning, walked rapidly away.

Presently she felt a light touch upon her shoulder and looking around beheld the gentleman who had been commissioned to procure the bride. He stated to her his object, and she hesitatingly assented.

He expressed his gratification in appropriate words, and requesting her to wait a moment, started in quest of two others to act as bridesmaids. In a moment he returned, and conducted them towards the door.

As the ladies entered all levity ceased, and the hitherto gay young gentlemen suddenly became deferential and reserved.

"Fair peasant," observed Clifton, "it is ordained by chance that you stand as the bride of Charles de Moor, art thou willing?"

Louise inclined her head.

"And you, ladies," he continued, turning to the others, "may choose from our group your groomsmen."

"Methinks I know your voice, Monsieur Clifton," remarked one, "and if you object not my choice falls upon you."

Clifton smiled beneath his mask, and arising, gave the lady his arm, and they advanced to their places at the side of the bride and bridegroom.

The remaining lady having selected Howard, and both having assumed their proper position, the ceremony began.

As it proceeded, and the responses were made in low tones, a kind of solemnity fell on all, inspired by the almost ominous silence which prevailed. Faces which but a moment before were wreathed in smiles, were now grave, and at the conclusion all wished the bride and bridegroom great joy, with as much fervour as though 'twere real.

"It is customary to have a banquet after the ceremony, and such as we have we invite you to," remarked Clifton, addressing the ladies.

They hesitated a moment, and then taking their seats at the table, eat a few grapes, but graciously declined the wine.

"Pardon me, ladies," observed Grey, "but I think we are all acquaintances; will you remove your masks?"

"No, I protest against it," interposed Rivere, "at midnight we can easily ascertain if it be as you imagine, and it would be unjust, as their favour was only attained by the condition that their real character should be preserved intact."

To this gallant defence of their rights the ladies murmured thanks, and, bowing to the gentlemen, withdrew.

In a moment the barrister arose, entered the *cavé*, remained there a moment, and then proceeded to the balcony. He met Louise at the head of the stairs, pressed something into her hand, and withdrew, ere she could utter a word.

With strange emotions exciting her mind she sought the nearest alcove, and seating herself at the table, spread the paper before her, and perused its contents.

As she read, her heart seemed to expand with joy and pain, and throbbed violently, while her mind was a chaos of disturbing thoughts, in which love, grief, and delight fought for supremacy, and to save herself from falling from the force of her conflicting feelings, she compressed her lips and clung desperately to her chair.

A few moments passed, when by great exertion she recovered her equanimity, and hiding the paper in her bosom, arose and went in search of her father.

At last, after a tedious walk, she saw him, and hastening to his side, grasped his hand, and pleadingly said :

"Papa, let us go home!"

With a look of surprise, he answered :

"What, so soon? I thought a masquerade was your especial delight."

"It is, at times; but I am very weary; will you not go?"

"It will soon be midnight, and then we can recognise our friends, you lose a great deal by leaving now."

That was exactly what she wished to avoid, and with almost intense earnestness, she continued :

"I care not to wait; I had rather not; please come now."

He gazed upon her in astonishment, and slowly asked :

"Why are you so hasty?"

She saw his searching look, and to explain her fervour said :

"I am very anxious about Mabel; surely you will grant my request."

"Since you are determined, I will accede," he replied, and repaired to the "coat room" to procure their garments.

In a moment he returned, though it seemed to the impatient girl that he had been gone an hour.

Assuming their apparel, both left the saloon. As they arrived at the hall door the trumpet sounded

for the dancers to unmash. Louise trembled as the clear notes fell upon her ear, and, thankful that she had escaped in time, she hurried into her carriage, and was soon moving rapidly towards home.

Little slept Louise Leigh that night. Thoughts of the morrow crowded her mind and kept her in a state of painful excitement.

CHAPTER XL

IT was morning, and Minnie Hamlin sat in a low chair, her hands clasped, and her eyes pensively downcast, anxiously awaiting the appearance of Paul. She had slept but little on the preceding night, and the painful solicitude she had experienced in regard to her brother had left a weary, careworn look upon her features.

She raised her eyes as she heard his step upon the stair, and the next moment he entered. As she saw the heavy, dull look of despair that pervaded his features the tears gathered in her brown orbs, and a choking sensation arose in her throat, as the sad truth forced itself upon her mind. She hesitated; then arising she placed her arms around his neck, and sobbed :

"Oh, Paul, you drank wine last night."

"And is this reproach your first greeting?" he sternly asked.

"Not that tone to me," she cried. "Oh, brother, speak not so, lest you break my heart."

"There, there, Minnie, forgive me; but you can never know the turmoil in my heart, the dead weight that has pressed upon my mind, as if trying to throttle my reason. I was nearly wild last night, and I knew not, I cared not what I did if I could only drown the thoughts which tortured my brain. I have had sorrow, but never, Minnie, did suffer as I have in the last twenty-four hours."

"And you would not tell me, Paul, that I might comfort you. I, too, have passed a sleepless night in consequence of your strange words and wild appearance."

"Tell me, Minnie? Yes, and though each word will pierce my heart I will repeat it! Know, then, that she whom I loved dearer than life; she, Minnie, whom I thought the purest, the best of her sex—she whom I would have shed my blood for, has—oh, I can say no more, my temples will burst!" and he pressed his hands to his head, while he trembled convulsively.

"Dear brother, control yourself; tell me the rest, that I may help you, for 'tis only woman that knows woman's heart."

"Help me?" he repeated. "Oh, no, no; if you only could! But let me on. I went to the house, I entered the rear drawing-room, I heard voices—and then—oh, heaven, sister—I saw Mabel Leigh in the embrace of a stranger! If I could have died then 'twere well, but now life is a curse!" and his eyes rolled restlessly about, and his hands involuntarily came together.

"Brother, I cannot believe her guilty of such perfidy."

"But I saw it, Minnie, and would I had been blind ere my eyes beheld it!"

"Hush, Paul," she gently remonstrated, "you are excited. It is only circumstantial evidence which you so loudly condemn, when taken in our courts against men, why should it any more be taken against women? You have been too hasty."

A gleam of hope entered his eye, and he exclaimed :

"Tell me sister, what shall I do?"

"Go to her, ask an explanation, and believe me she will render you one, most satisfactory."

"You speak as one confident," he gasped, "know you aught of truth?"

"Entertain no hopes based upon my words. I am certain, however, from your description of her, that she cannot have thus deceived you."

His head fell upon his hand, and for a few moments he was silent; then looking up he weakly said :

"I have too much pride to seek her, after what has passed."

"Pride, Paul? Is your love so weak that such considerations can influence it?"

"No, no, not that, but it is her place to avow her wrong."

"How do you know there is a wrong? The only path for you to pursue is the one I have indicated. Go, brother, and when you return you will bless me for having sent you."

"I will, Minnie; you are a darling sister, and my prayer is that my mission may result as you prophesy," and pressing a kiss upon her cheek he left the room.

A few moments he again stood upon those steps where he had been under so many different circumstances and with so many varied emotions surging within his breast. For a moment thoughts of his purpose caused him to tremble; then taking a long

breath as if to inhale courage from the bracing air, he put forth his hand and rang the bell.

His summons was immediately answered, and with a slight feeling of trepidation he entered, and proceeded to the drawing-room. Upon the threshold he paused, as if to gain strength, and then walked slowly into the room.

Upon a sofa, with her head turned from him, and resting upon her hand, appeared Mabel; her face wearing an expression of heart anguish, the more pitiful from its silence, and the sad light that emitted from the glorious eyes, which were directed upon the floor.

As his gaze rested upon her, and noted the sorrowful face, he forgot his own anger and grief, forgot that she had deceived him, forgot everything, and, with his idolatrous love conquering every other feeling, he rushed forward, precipitated himself at her feet, and pressing her hand to his lips, murmured: "Mabel!"

So quick had been his action, so great her astonishment, that for the moment she only remembered that he, her lover, was before her, and her heart answered before her pride could rise:

"Oh, Paul!"

In those short words were contained all of a true heart's boundless love, though in a moment after the vision of him in her sister's embrace, fell like an icy hand to check its outflow and congeal it with terrible reflection, and drawing away her hand, while a look of stern reserve shaded her fair face, she coldly continued:

"Mr. Hamlin, why are you here?"

"Why am I here?" he passionately repeated. "How can you ask that? You should know that I am here to beg of you to drive away the fearful doubt that has made chaos of my mind, to assure me—oh, Mabel, that you are still true to me!"

"I have never been untrue, Paul!" a moisture gathering in the full, dark eyes.

"Do I hear right? Do you tell me that I have been deluded? Do you tell me that I did not see you clasped to the arms of a stranger, only yesterday, in this very room. Oh, Mabel, speak and tell me."

"You did see me in that position, and it is true that I love that man!"

"Mabel," he ejaculated, with pallid face and glaring eye, "do not torture me thus—explain, I beseech you, or you will drive me mad!"

"It was my brother," she lowly rejoined, with something like reproach in the tone.

Like a healing balm those words fell upon his wounded spirit, and once more bright hopes arose in his mind, and his heart once more became light, while in his joy he essayed to clasp her in his arms, but she repulsed him with a frigid air.

"Oh, what means this?" he groaned. "You elevate me with joy, and then crush me by your coldness. Do you no longer love me?"

"Paul," she rejoined, in a low, sad tone, "you have heard my explanation, now I should like to have yours."

"Mine, Mabel?"

And he gazed upon her in bewilderment.

"Yes, yours; how can I think you are true to me, when I saw my sister's arms about your neck?"

"When—where; and yet I believe I remember, though I was nearly senseless with grief, at hearing your interchange of affection with your brother. If at all, and I would not say it were true, it must have been at that moment."

"And is this all you can offer, Paul? Your remark reflects upon Louise; surely, you would not lay to her charge what you alone were guilty of."

"Mabel, can you doubt me—do you mistrust my honour? As heaven hears and judges of my words, I am true to you—love only you! What I have said is truth."

"After that, Paul, I could not doubt you; but it is very strange, I am greatly perplexed, for I surely saw you in my sister's embrace."

A light gradually broke over Paul Hamlin's mind, and although conceit was not one of his faults, he could not but think that Louise, too, loved him. He made no mention to Mabel of the thoughts that were passing in his mind, but withdrawing from his pocket the note he had received from Louise the day previous, he passed it to her with the remark:

"There, Mabel, you may draw what inference you please; by that alone was I induced to visit this house yesterday afternoon."

Eagerly she took it, and agitated by many warring emotions, proceeded to peruse it. As she finished, she looked sadly upon him, and observed:

"This, Paul, creates a contingency, which, should it prove true, would be most unhappy for me and others."

"Doubtless, you have reference to the same subject that occupied my mind a moment ago, much against my desire. But forget that. All I want to know is—do you absolve me?"

"Wholly, dear Paul!"

And once again that beauteous face reflected the light of trusting love.

"Oh, my Mabel, now once more I am happy! The cloud which has hovered on the horizon of our love is dispelled; may never another come!"

And he drew her tenderly to him.

Looking up through the tears of joy which gave a mellow light to her luminous eyes, she murmured:

"Oh, Paul, the last twenty-four hours have been the unhappiest of my life, and, from my heart, I pray that I may never again feel that worst of pains—the thought that you doubt me!"

"Never, darling—never! I must have been mad; and yet it was so plain for the moment, but that moment—thank heaven—has passed, and is recorded among the dead troubles of this life, and you, my Mabel—my sweet Mabel, are once again mine!"

"Yes, Paul, yours," she lowly repeated, as if she would never tire of the music of the words; "but you must always trust me, else you break that heart that beats only for you."

"There is no power on earth can cause me to doubt you again, Mabel, and as I look upon you, and think that I have doubted, it seems like an unpardonable sin."

And he fondly smoothed the dark hair, while those speaking eyes were raised to his in melting glances of pure affection.

In a moment, Paul arose and seated himself in a chair opposite, and to the mute query that her looks suggested, he replied:

"I hear a step in the hall; someone approaches."

The words had hardly escaped his lips, ere Mr. Leigh entered, and seeing Paul, greeted him with the greatest politeness and respect.

After a short interval of silence, Mr. Leigh remarked:

"Not long since, Mr. Hamlin, you asked me for my daughter Mabel in marriage—nay, move not, child, you may as well hear it—and I stated to you that I would consider your request. I have, and now, as far as I am concerned, she is yours. What say you, my daughter?"

"That I thank you, father!" stammered Mabel, confounded.

"And I can only say, Mr. Leigh, that she shall be treasured as the flower of my heart, the light of my life!"

"Then, my children, I can only wish you every happiness that can fall to the lot of mortals."

"And here," said Paul, a little proudly, "I can call you, Mabel—mine."

And he pressed a kiss upon her brow.

"Not yours, for you are my husband!" sounded a clear, ringing voice, and Louise Leigh rushed into the room, holding high above her head a paper.

Mabel clasped Paul's wrist with a tenacious grasp, while a terrible fear shot across her mind, and seemed to deaden her heart.

For an instant, an ominous, foreboding, portentous, tantalising silence prevailed; then while weakness seemed sapping the fountain of his being, Paul turned towards her, and gasped:

"What means this? In heaven's name, speak!"

"The girl's crazy!" exclaimed Mr. Leigh, angrily.

Louise turned her bright eyes from one to the other, and while her face grew a shade paler, answere in hard, sharp tones:

"There is the marriage certificate, read!"

With a hand shaking with terror, and a heart filled with terror and foreboding, Paul Hamlin tore it from her grasp, and directed his wild eyes upon it.

He had perused one line, his face became ashy pale, his eyes rolled in dire agony, his brain swam, and catching at the piano for support, while his limbs bent beneath him, he frantically cried:

"Oh, my Mabel! Oh, my God—'tis true!"

As these words struck upon Mabel's ear, a coldness akin to freezing, possessed her whole being; her heart seemed suddenly to stop its vibrations, her eyes shone with a light which would have melted to tears the hardest nature, and between the short gasps of breath, came the words in a low spasmodic whisper:

"Do you love him, Louise?"

The latter saw her anguish, and while deep contrition, and bitter remorse flooded her mind, she prostrated herself at her feet, and wildly ejaculated:

"Yes—yes, with my hope of salvation! But forgive, oh, Mabel—sister—forgive me!"

A mist arose before the large, dark eyes; the pale face was raised to Heaven, the lips quivered painfully, and like a dying zephyr came the reply:

"I do! Oh, Father of Light help me!"

The face grew staid, the long lashes swept the white cheek, and the spirit gave way, and she sank into her father's arms apparently lifeless.

With a cry of terror, which reverberated through the room in trembling, shrill, agonising accents,

Paul Hamlin dashed towards her, but was pushed back by Henry Leigh, who fiercely exclaimed:

"Go from my house—villain, murderer, begone! As for you, girl, may a dark curse cling to you for ever! Go, ere in my desperation I kill you—go! go!"

"Oh, father," moaned Louise, "take back those words I pray you—oh, take them back."

He glanced towards her with the fire of rage shining from his eyes, and hissed between his clinched teeth:

"Go! See you angel who forgave you in the midst of your accursed iniquity! Go, I say! never dare to call me father again! Go, the sight of you makes me mad!"

Sick at heart, Louise grasped Paul's arm and led him away, while he, with head sunk upon his breast, and his reason wavering on its throne, walked moodily by her side, without giving any sign of life except motion.

Crossing the street, Louise rang the bell of the Hamlin mansion. Presently a servant answered, and they entered.

New fear, and feeling like a criminal, Louise ascended the stairs, followed by Paul, who spoke not a word.

At last she stood at the drawing-room door. An instant she hesitated, and then, with a prayer that she might find a friend in Minnie, she pushed it open.

The latter saw her, and wondered at her restless appearance and startled looks.

Without giving her time to speak, Louise threw herself upon her neck, and cried:

"And the tears burst in a flood from her eyes.

(To be continued.)

THE Queen has approved of the design for the New Zealand medal. The die is being engraved at the Mint, and the medal will probably be ready for issue very shortly.

HER MAJESTY has been graciously pleased to contribute 100*l.* towards the fund for enlarging the National Sanatorium for Consumption and Diseases of the Chest at Bournemouth.

Most of the old copper coins in use before the introduction of the bronze coinage have disappeared from circulation. With a view, however, to their entire extinction, a proclamation has been issued ordering that from the 31st December next the old copper money shall not be legally current in the United Kingdom.

An account is published of the death of a Waterloo veteran, Moses Dyer. He enlisted in 1801, was in the chief battles of the Peninsular campaign, and was severely wounded at Waterloo. He was 86 years old. His eldest son was in eleven engagements during the Indian mutiny, and, from the effects of this campaign, suddenly dropped dead on board ship as he was returning to England.

MR. SPURGEON having been greatly disturbed by persons fainting during the services at his Tabernacle, he has caused it to be made known to the ladies who indulge in this habit, that in future they will not have the privilege of being carried out; but that water and smelling bottles will be placed in different parts of the building for their use.

VELOCIPEDES races organised by the Velo Club of Lyons have taken place at the camp of Sathonay. Among the novelties introduced was a steeplechase, in which the competitors had to go down a tremendous incline, across a ditch, and surmount other obstacles. In fact it was the first of the steeplechases with velocipedes. England has no notion of such smart doings with the wheels as this.

ON Monday, May 10, at half-past two o'clock, the railway which connects the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans was completed. It is now possible to travel across the American continent, a distance of 3,000 miles, without changing carriages, although it would take a week to do so, travelling night and day. Indians can at any moment produce a startling dénouement to the little trip.

AN "ELIGIBLE BUILDING SITE"—The East London and Cambridge Heath Cemetery, closed by Government simply because it could hold no more, coffins in its latter days having to be placed above and not under the ground, has been taken by some very spirited builder for building purposes. Cheap houses, with neat gardens in front and rear, are to occupy the place of the abodes of the dead, who are to be left to slumber on fully 50 in. deep beneath the kitchen floors! The tombstones have been carted off by the score to a stonemason, and duly cut into

mantel-shelves, door-steps, and lintels for the new houses! Can all this be possible? We would fain hope there is some mistake. If not, however, the "spirited builder" ought to be put in limbo in the meantime for stealing the tombstones, if he cannot be prosecuted for desecration of the dead. We are not surprised to hear that very energetic reclamations have been made by those more immediately interested, and that legal proceedings are threatened.

VIOLA.

STARLIGHT in Venice. The gondola glided swiftly through the still waters of the broad lagune. It was so late in the night that half of the ancient palaces, which arose in all the grandeur and sombre majesty of the old Venetian architecture on either side of the canals were gloomily lightless; but the soft stars bloomed out so brightly and innumerable in the deep, transparent darkness of the Italian midnight that the still, glassy depths of the gently murmuring stream were paved with golden lights, and to the scarcely heardplash of the oar, the dark gondola moved through the quiet waters like a dream of peace.

A story of Venice and of woman's heart. Venice and Passion. The words are similarly suggestive. There is no ferocity, no treachery, like that which kindles in the leopard's eye. There is no passion, ocean-deep and illimitable, like that which glows beneath the quiet mask of Venice.

Beppo occupied the interior of the gondola with Esmeralda. The regal beauty and splendour of this woman, which had so long illuminated the Venetian stage as its most steadfast star, was on the wane; but she would not confess it to her own heart. Beppo, the maestro at her side had brought her forth as a public songstress, as he had produced many before her, and moreover, was her lover. He was a man of middle age, but well preserved and still handsome. The passion which he had at one time entertained for Esmeralda was slowly cooling. She was becoming advanced in years, was growing stout, and though as a fixture, she would long remain a favourite, the meridian of her triumph had been reached and passed. Besides, there were younger candidates for the laurels of the operatic stage and fresher faces, and it was very natural that the Maestro Beppo, as he was familiarly called, should be fond of both freshness and youth.

But he was just as engaging, just as self-sacrificing, to all appearance, as he had ever been; for certain ladies are passionate and fierce when the heart is involved, and for the enjoyment of a quiet life, it is not always reasonable to provoke them to premature jealousy.

"Tell me, Beppo," said Esmeralda, "what will be the success of thy new pupil, Viola?"

"Excellent, I trust, Esmeralda," replied the maestro. "To-morrow evening will tell the tale. Of course, it will redound to my own advantage if her success is great."

"She must have a marvellous voice for substantial success," said Esmeralda, with a sneer; "for, most assuredly, she cannot throw into the scale the additional weight of personal charms."

Beppo leaned out of the casement of the gondola, and gazed first on the starry sky, and then into the flowing stream, which reflected the firmament so completely.

"And yet," he said, musingly, "I have seen those who thought her beautiful—heavily."

"You do not think her so?" exclaimed Esmeralda, very sharply and very quickly.

"That would be impossible."

"Wherefore?"

"Because," said the Maestro Beppo, and taking her white hand in his, while he drew her, all too willing, to his lips; "because I am the accepted lover of Esmeralda, the Queen of Venice."

She may have known better than to believe him, but he had touched her vanity, and she did not resist the pressure of his lips.

"It will be better for thee, Beppo, if it is so," she cried, vehemently; "for I would no more brook a rival in my heart, than upon the stage. Come! we are at the palace gate. We have sailed in the moonlight long enough. Good-night, Giovanni! Here is a florin for thy faithful oar."

She tossed the boatman a piece of silver, and followed by her lover, proceeded up the marble steps which led from the water to the palace door. A moment later and a light gleamed from an upper window.

Upon the following night, the great theatre of Venice was crammed to suffocation. It was the *début* of the young prima donna, Viola. The knowledge that Signor Beppo, the great maestro, had been preparing her for the opera many months was alone sufficient to cram the theatre.

"What is Beppo's last?"

"We are dying for fresh songsters. When will Beppo, the maestro, cage a fresh singing-bird?" "What! going to Florence for music? Why, Beppo brings forth his fresh one to-morrow!"

Such were the expressions of the day, and even the peerless beauty, the still splendid voice of Esmeralda, could not lessen the excitement occasioned by the first appearance of Viola, who was a stranger in Venice. Even her personal appearance was but little known. She was a wild bird from the Tyrol, with nothing but her mountain plumage and her young voice for recommendations.

Signor Beppo sat in a proscenium box with Esmeralda at his side.

The curtain was trembling upon the rise; the great multitude surged at their feet, and blossomed like a magnificent garden, around the glistening tiers.

"*Corpo di Bacco!*" exclaimed Beppo, rubbing his hands with pleasure. "We have a magnificent house! This, Esmeralda, reminds me of thine olden triumphs. There are, even now, as many lorgnettes directed this way as though you were upon the stage."

A blush of pleasure overspread the soft cheek of the lady, and her eyes beamed with dewy lustre.

"Tell me the truth, Beppo," she said, "dost think that thy Viola, thy new songstress, whom I have never seen, will win the laurels from my brows?"

The glance from her dark eyes was so piercingly inquisitive that Beppo would not, then and there, have told her the truth for his weight in gold—and he dearly loved gold.

"Some laurels are transient, others are deathless, Esmeralda," said he. "Would I go to the mountains for a little brown bird to compare with the Philomela of our Italian plains?"

She not only smiled again, but drew him back behind the crimson curtains of the box, and kissed him tenderly.

The curtain arose, and Viola appeared upon the stage.

It was a moment of universal and delighted surprise. She was not only supremely beautiful, but charmingly fresh and lovely, with the free airs of her mountain home. She was also courageous. At the trying moment—that first dizzy instant of time, when all the energies must be brought to bear—when everything depends, and there can be no helping hand—when all try so desperately, and nine-tenths fail—she did not quail.

The opening part was a difficult one. Clear, fresh, healthful, voluminous, her brave voice soared aloft, snatching intuitively the mystery of the music, and grasping familiarly the inmost spirit of the author's inspiration. She flung formalities to the winds, and strode forth, free and untrammeled, a genius and great prima donna—an empress of music and of song.

When the curtain descended upon the first act, a tremendous applause announced the success of the *débutante*, and told Esmeralda that she must, perchance, surrender the sceptre of her power in Venice.

Beppo was filled with intense gratification. He was so proud, he partook so largely of the success of his pupil, that he forgot even to fear the woman at his side.

"Traitor!" hissed Esmeralda. "Thou hast lied to me utterly! But do not think that I will tamely submit to being replaced by this peasant of the Alps! I, at least, can help to mar her triumph!"

"*Corpo di Christo!*" he hissed, between his clinched teeth. "If thou utterest one word that the audience can hear, I will stab thee in the eyes of all Venice!"

By a strong effort—an effort which a woman makes fifty times in a lifetime, and never succeeds in doing more than once—frequently not that—Esmeralda controlled herself, and said to Signor Beppo:

"Enough! Why should I care? There is no flower that must not fade with the course of time; and my summer has been a long one. It is even now the spring of the year, and the violet is in season. Good-night, I will stay no longer! I wish the success with thy new warbler from the mountains. My gondolier awaits me at the foot of the stair. I require no escort. Good-night!"

Beppo knew that this was the final breach between them, but he was intoxicated with his own triumph; and could afford to slight her scorn. Immediately after the departure of Esmeralda, the box was filled with his admirers of both sexes, and the success of Viola was augmented at every phase. There was wine and a banquet afterwards; Beppo had never before been so popular. It was near morning when he remembered his appointment to meet Viola at the palace of a friend, and the illuminated dial on the Tower of Saint Marc apprised him that he had but a few moments to spare.

Beppo was not altogether sober when he strayed down the marble steps of the theatre leading into the water, in search of a gondolier. The swarthy Giovanni was the only one who happened to be lurking in the shadow of the colonnade.

"Giovanni," said the maestro, "row me speedily to the palace of the Colonna, just at the left of the main canal. By the way, didst thou convey the Signora Esmeralda to her home?"

"Yes, signor. She departed three hours ago for her palace, accompanied by Viola, the prima donna, whose fame is already beginning to ring through Venice. I brought the message to the Signora Viola as coming from thine own lips, signor."

Beppo had one foot on the gunwale of the gondola, but he drew back suddenly, and appeared completely sobered.

"How say'st thou?" he cried, while a wild, indefinite feeling of evil ran coldly to his heart.

The gondolier repeated his words, and then said: "Shall I row Signor Beppo to the palace of the Colonna, just to the left of the Grand Canal?"

"No!" exclaimed Beppo, with a bitter oath. "To the palace of Esmeralda! I have one hundred scudi in my purse, Giovanni. It shall be thine if thou rowest me thither with sufficient speed!"

He sprang into the boat, all but overturning it in his vehemence. The long oar of the gunneler cut the water with its swift, bright blade; and the gondola glided swiftly through the lagune.

Beppo was nervous and frightened. He knew none better than he—the fierce, passionate nature of Esmeralda, and now for the first time, remembered clearly how he had provoked it. As the gondola swept in view of her palace, he saw a faint light glimmering from an upper casement.

"Haste, Giovanni, haste!" he cried, feverishly. "All that I possess is thine if thou bringest me in time to save Viola from death, and Esmeralda from the crime of murder!"

Giovanni bowed to his work till the tough oar beat like a willow-wand in his sturdy grasp, and the waters foamed beneath the vigour of its rushing wake.

In a moment they were at the foot of the stair.

Beppo sprang up the steps. A servant was there to question him, but he dashed him aside, and bursting through the door, sprang up the inner staircase, and threaded the long, dark galleries with a trembling and rapid step.

The deep-tufted Turkish carpet of the hall deadened his hasty footfalls, and the door of the single apartment, wherefrom the lamplight glimmered, was ajar.

He comprehended everything the moment he entered. Viola was in the bed asleep. The remnants of a feast were scattered over the floor—shattered dishes and broken goblets. The wine had been drugged, and Viola was surely asleep.

Beppo stood for a moment, frozen with fear—not knowing how to act.

Esmeralda was bending over the sleeper, with a long, slender poignard in her right hand, in the very act of striking, and the lamp she carried in her left cast the reflection of her murderous purpose on the wall, and shed a flickering radiance over the form and features of the unconscious victim. There was no doubt of the purpose of Esmeralda, whose beautiful features were wreathed with hate and distorted with passion.

Beppo sprang forward, with a loud shriek.

"Hold! Esmeralda, hold!" he cried.

But he was too late.

The gleaming stiletto descended, and drank the life of the sleeper, who turned in the couch, gasped once, and expired, with a mere quivering of the eyelids, while the drapery of the couch and her snowy night-robe were instantly incarnadined with the gushing blood.

Esmeralda plucked forth the reeking steel, and turned upon Beppo.

"Such is the doom of thy mountain songster!" she cried. "Look that the master follow not the pupill!"

Beppo sank upon his knees, and there was nothing but supreme horror in his countenance.

"Miserable murderer! Helpless Esmeralda!" he gasped. "Viola was my child—mine own daughter! Thou art lost, indeed!"

Esmeralda was sentenced to death, but she committed suicide in prison before the sentence could be carried into effect. The popularity of the Maestro Beppo waned rapidly in Venice, and, a few years later, he died, broken-hearted, and in exceeding indigence and misery.

N. D. U.

POULTRY.—Poultry should be kept everywhere, except in the streets, by all classes, rich and poor. The prices of poultry are excessive, and ought to be lowered; but they can only be lowered by increasing the supply much more than the demand. The demand constantly increases, and will continue to increase, as wealth and population increase; and, on the other hand, as civilisation advances, bringing drainage and other improvements in its train, the

water-fowl and wading birds, which used abundantly to compete in the markets with poultry proper, are becoming more rare and dear. Not only has the feathered produce of the fens and coast of this country been thus diminished, but that of Holland and other neighbouring coasts is well-nigh exhausted; and the poultry salesmen of London are now largely supplied with water-fowl from inland places beyond sea. The insatiable cravings of fashion are said, moreover, to be answerable for the destruction of great numbers of pheasants, and other birds of bright plumage; and though one cannot understand why the English pastry-cook is unable to convert into pies the bodies of birds thus sacrificed, it is positively stated by Mr. Brooke, the manager of Messrs. Broome, the great poultry salesmen, that while pheasant pies are made in great numbers, and with a profit, in France, there is no such custom in England. The importation of eggs and poultry from France and Holland is already enormous, and may be much increased; but why should not the home growth of such excellent articles of food be increased? Why should not the United Kingdom produce eggs and poultry enough for its own wants, if not for exportation?

THE QUEEN'S GIFT OF BALMORAL BURSARIES.—The Queen has appropriated 2,500*l.* of the profits arising from the sale of "The Leaves from a Journal," to establishing school and college bursaries for the benefit of well deserving scholars in the district round Balmoral. An important and admirable feature in the endowment is a declaration that "the bursaries are not to be given in connexion with special education for any profession, in the choice of which the bursars shall be quite free, the object being to assist in procuring for the bursars the means of a thoroughly sound general education of the best kind which the parish school and university can afford."

THE FISHERMAN'S TREASURE.

In a small hamlet called Torra di Lavoro, on the Gaetano Gulf, within the Kingdom of Naples, lived an old fisherman named Antonio Morino. He was called a fisherman because, in his younger days, he had pursued that occupation for a livelihood; and because, at the present time, he owned boats, and frequently joined the toilers upon the Gulf in their piscatory cruings. At the age of five-and-twenty he had left his native land for a voyage to India, having had promise of much better pay than he could possibly make by fishing. The ship in which he sailed from Naples never returned, and Antonio Morino was given up for lost, and almost forgotten. At the expiration of fifteen years, however, he once more made his appearance in the hamlet, and was warmly welcomed by his old friends. He told how his ship had been cast away in the Indian Ocean, and all hands lost save himself.

At the age of forty Antonio settled down in his old home, and took a wife; and in time a son was born to him, whom he called Leonardo. He bought boats, and spent a portion of his time in fishing; but he evidently did this for pastime; for he never sold any of his fish, but gave to his poorer neighbours what he did not consume in his own family. He made no show of money, and yet he always had it when it was needed. His companions were curious, and sought to fathom his secret, but without avail. Morino seemed to have but one grand aim of life; and that was, to rear his son to a station of honour and independence.

Now the story of Antonio Morino's absence from Italy was this. His ship had been cast away upon the coast of Ceylon, and such of the crew as had not been drowned, with the exception of himself, had been killed by the natives. Antonio had saved his fishing apparatus, the peculiarities of which interested the savages; and they spared him in order that he might fish for them.

From material obtained from the wreck he made lines, hooks, and nets, and in time came to be a favourite in the village, and was allowed much liberty. One day, while out in his boat alone, engaged in fishing for the chief, he found a deep, rock-bound inlet which he had never before seen, and where he was sure the natives were not in the habit of stopping. In this bay he fished up several large oysters, the shells of which he recognised to be such as furnished mother-of-pearl. He opened them and found pearls! He kept the secret to himself, and when he had opportunity he went out and fished for these valuable oysters; and in three years time he had accumulated a large store, many of which were of extraordinary size and beauty. By-and-bye Antonio made his escape by venturing to run his boat far out to sea, and safely reached the port of Negombo, where he found a Dutch ship bound for Calcutta, in which he took passage, paying the price of his passage by a small pearl. Arrived in Calcutta, he soon

found a ship bound for the Mediterranean; but before she sailed he was waited upon by a Bengalese merchant, who asked him if he had any pearls to sell.

The Dutch captain, it seems, had suspected the fact, and had told the merchant. The Bengalese proved himself an honourable and responsible man, and our adventurer offered the bulk of his pearls, and received for them a sum in gold equal to about two hundred thousand crowns. The possession of this sum would have made him crazy if his conversation with the Dutchman had not given him to understand something near the value of the property he held.

And with this wealth Antonio Morino had made his way back to his home. From Leghorn, where he landed, he had brought his gold down the coast in his own boat, and had concealed it in his cellar, having dug a hole in which to place it. And this gold the adventurer was now keeping for his son. He had no idea of investments, or interests; his only concern being to keep a knowledge of his possession from those who would surely rob him if they knew the secret.

At the age of twelve years Leonardo, grown to be a bright and handsome boy, was sent to Capua, to school; and while he was absent his mother died. At the age of eighteen he went to Lyons, and thence to Paris, where he made himself acquainted with mercantile matters. On the very day that he was one-and-twenty he came home, bringing with him a beautiful girl whom he wished to make his wife. She was a native of Marseilles—an orphan—and named Cora. Old Antonio loved her at once, and the nuptial ceremonies were not long delayed.

On the day following the wedding the old man conducted Leonardo and Cora down into the cellar, and showed them, in the pit, twelve stout earthen jars full of gold. And then he told them the story of his adventures in the Indian Ocean.

"My son," he concluded, "this great wealth I have saved for you; but we must not expose it here. On the morrow we will move it away, and set sail for France. You and Cora shall make a home in Marseilles, and I will be happy with you."

Cora asked if there were robbers in the neighbourhood.

"Ah," said Antonio, shaking his head, "you don't know our country. The nobles would be our robbers. Look at Gregorio Barbieri, the Count of Mondragone, who gained a title and a castle just because he discovered the famous medicinal waters; he would not hesitate to rob a church if he had opportunity."

There seemed to be a direful magic spell in the calling of that name; for within half-an-hour after they had ascended from the cellar the Count of Mondragone, accompanied by six serving men as evil-looking and as ugly as himself, made his appearance at the cot. He did not stop to ask questions there, but having seized upon Antonio and his son, and bound them hand and foot, he bore them away to his castle of Mondragone, where they were introduced at once into a torture-chamber—a dark, dismal, underground crypt—and where the count made known his business.

He had long suspected that Antonio Morino possessed much wealth, and had closely watched all his movements. He had sent a spy to be present at the wedding of the son with Cora, and had learned that the old man had bestowed on the bride a necklace of oriental pearls. And now he demanded to know the truth. But Antonio would not tell him, nor would the son. Then the count called in his assistants, and the old fisherman was stripped, put upon the rack, and his wrists and ankles lashed to the rollers, poor Leonardo standing, all the while, so fettered that he could afford his father no relief.

"Now, Antonio Morino," pronounced the count, "tell me, where is your gold? I ask not whether you have much, or little; but I simply demand to know—where is it? I will set your body upon the torment, and I will rack your limbs from their sockets, if you do not tell me! And if you die in your silence, I will put your son in your place; and he, too, shall undergo the terrible ordeal. Now speak—where is your gold hidden?"

What could the old man do? He knew that the wicked count would keep his word. Had there been hope that his silence could have preserved the gold to his son, he would have died ere he would have spoken.

"Hold!" cried Leonardo, as he saw the strong men about to turn the racking beams. "I will tell!"

"No, no, my son!"

"How! Dost think I would have gold that had cost me my father's life? No, not a twinge of pain shall rack thy dear old limbs, if I can prevent it. Look ye, sir count—"

The old fisherman interposed, and asked Barbieri how much gold would satisfy him. The base and covetous man knew that father and son were in his power, and he would have all, or none. At length,

when he saw that there could be no possible hope, old Morino spoke:

"The gold is in my cellar. In the corner next the old fountain is a flagging-stone of a darker hue than its mates, and at the angle nearest the wall is an opening large enough for the insertion of a hand. Raise this stone, and you will find twelve earthen jars, with leaden covers, filled with gold. It is all I possess of wealth in the world. If you will leave for my poor boy two jars—only two!"

But the count would not stop to listen to prayers. It was now very near nightfall; and as soon as he could get his horses ready, he set forth, bearing the father and son back, as he had brought them, bound hand and foot; and he said to them if he found the gold, they should be free; but if he found it not, they should suffer.

It was very dark when they reached the cot, and the women were not there; but Barbieri thought not of them. With lighted torches he went to the cellar, where he found the stone, as Antonio had said; and underneath it he found the twelve jars; and having removed one of the leaden covers he beheld the glittering gold. He handled the precious pieces that his eye might not be deceived; and he lifted more of the coins. With the assistance of his men he bore the heavy jars to the yard; and when he was ready to start away, he turned to give Antonio and his son a parting word to the effect that, if they made any stir about the matter, they should both die.

Antonio Morino and his son were left alone. The old man sank down into his chair overwhelmed with grief, while Leonardo sought to comfort him.

"No, no, my boy—you cannot bring joy to my soul again! Oh! how many years have I preserved this treasure for thee! For myself I care not; but for my dear son—"

At this juncture Cora and her maid entered the cot.

"Oh, dear Leonardo, have those terrible men gone?"

"Yes, yes, my sweet wife."

"And the vessel our father had provided—is it ready for sea?"

"Yes, my precious love."

"The wicked count took you away that he might gain from you the secret of your hidden wealth?"

"Yes. He would have put my father to dreadful torture, and I told him where the gold was concealed. And he has borne it all away."

"Not all," returned Cora, with brightening look. "When I knew that the Count of Mondragone had carried you away I could well guess his intent; and I furthermore knew that my dear husband would not see his father suffer for the sake of preserving the secret. That the wretch would return in quest of the treasure I felt very sure; and I naturally judged that he would bring you back with him. But I did not mean that he should rob you if I could help it. So I called Lizette, and we went to the cellar and emptied all the gold from the jars into leathern sacks which we found in the upper chamber. Then we refilled the jars with balls and bolts of lead which we cut from the old fishing-nets in the shed. We filled them almost full, but were careful to place on the top a layer of gold coin, so that, if the robber should open them, as I knew he would, he should not readily discover the cheat."

"Cheer up, dear father, and prepare for flight. The wicked count has gone off only with a lot of worthless lead, while almost the whole of your gold is at this moment in the boat which you left secured at the landing-steps back of the cot. You know the tops of the jars were very small, and it required but little gold to cover the exposed surface."

The old man caught the heroic little woman in his arms, and blessed her, and then hastened with his preparations for departure. Every minute was precious; for Barbieri might come back very soon. But they had not much to do. Their vessel, a small felucca, was lying close in by the shore, and before midnight they had bid farewell to the Terra di Lavoro for ever; and when, two hours later, the Count of Mondragone came to the cot, filled with wrath, and swearing vengeance and death, they were far away on the bosom of the gulf, catching the fair, brisk breeze that tipped the wave-crests towards the Tuscan sea—far away towards the new home, where peace, comfort and joy were to be theirs, and where Antonio Morino was to be amply blessed in the evening of his life by the love and devoted care of those for whom he had so long and so self-sacrificingly held his strangely-gotten wealth.

S. C. J.

THE FOURTEENTH MAN AT TABLE.—They believe strange things of us in France. A Paris journal gravely relates that there recently died in London a gentleman whose profession it was to make the fourteenth man at table at any dinner party, where the unlucky number of thirteen assembled. "It was

the gentleman's practice," says the veracious French journal, "to call at the houses of his fashionable connections and ask if his services were required. His charge was his dinner and five guineas." One in thirteen is the actuary's average in insurance calculations, when the party is a miscellaneous or unsettled one. So there is an arithmetical foundation, but if twenty-six dine together the risk will be double.

FAIRLEIGH; OR, THE BANKER'S SECRET.

CHAPTER XLV.

MISS BUNT returned to the door, and met Josh as he was entering with his burden. She threw up her hands astounded; a volley of bitter invective and accusation trembled upon her tongue, but she repressed it for the sake of the pale lady and her suffering son.

It will be remembered that Josh left the house of the young doctor in a very mysterious manner, at the same time that his second recreant groom did. Hence Miss Bunt's antipathy against him, and suspicion in regard to him.

As civilly as possible, though with several grimaces, which she could not stifle, Miss Bunt led the way to the sitting-room, where a couch had been placed in readiness, and upon which Walter was immediately placed. She determined, however, to call Mr. Joshua Simpkins to account as soon as a propitious opportunity should present itself.

The warm room and its comfortable appearance, and the earnestness upon the part of Miss Bunt to make her guests feel at home, caused a more contented feeling to come over them, which was noticeable in the changed expression of both mother and son.

"Now, Josh, will you tell me how you managed to get out of the cellar?" asked Walter.

"I'll tell you by-and-bye; but now I want suthin' to eat;" and with the intention of accelerating Miss Bunt's movements in that quartor, he started for the kitchen.

As he entered, the lady's back was turned towards him, and hearing his step she changed her position. As she discovered who the intruder was, she placed her arms akimbo, threw back her head, pursed up her lips, and gazed a moment upon him with a half disdainful, half provoked expression, and then burst out with the following:

"I should like to know what you are here again for, and how you managed to get into good company? You are a nice man, you are, to come here and then steal away like a thief. Where did our groom go to, and what have you to say for yourself? That's what I want to know. If good Mrs. Dalvane knew what a scamp you were, she wouldn't have a word to say to you; no she wouldn't now."

And like a judge waiting for a culprit to speak, Miss Bunt gazed at Josh, never taking her eyes from him, or changing her position.

Josh seated himself very coolly. Slowly placed his hands in the arm-holes of his vest, with the fingers outward, threw one leg over the other, then looking up with a careless, comical expression, he replied:

"Yeou deon't say, Miss Bunt! Yeour wishes air jess eggzactly like most other females, they allus want jess eggzactly what they can't have; allus grapsin' for suthin' what's out of their reach. Neow scuin' as I've heerd yeou very pashuntly, I shood like to have yeou hear me. Fust, I'm hungry; neow mind, that is suthin' that is not out of my reach, and I want suthin' to eat. Secondly, yeou must get it. Hold yeour tongue, that ain't out of your reach, mind that."

"Ain't you 'shamed of yourself, you impudent—Oh you—oh, how mad I am!" and she twisted the corners of her apron until the cloth nearly parted.

"Oh no," returned Josh, shaking his great red head, "oh no, you ain't mad, not a bit—playin' it off for my 'musement."

She could not endure his provoking, aggravating, tantalising comicality; and deeply muttering, she went about her work.

In a short time Miss Bunt had a tempting, savoury meal upon the table, and Mrs. Dalvane was invited into the dining-room, while poor Walter, who was so badly burned that to breathe even was painful, reclined upon the sofa in the sitting-room.

But he was not forgotten, and with her own hands Miss Bunt carried to him delicacies and fed him, for he could not raise his arms without much suffering.

He was very grateful. Indeed it seemed as if friends were raised up especially to protect him and his.

In a short time Dr. Sampson, for whom the groom had been sent, arrived, examined Walter's wounds, and applied to them a healing, soothing ointment, which in a short time relieved the excruciating pain, for although Walter did not complain, he had been suffering inexpressibly.

When his mother was again beside him, and Josh,

after pacifying Miss Bunt, had again entered the room, Walter said:

"Now tell me, please, how you got out of the cellar."

"It's easy 'nough; you know the cellar door what was on the east wall? Well, I managed to get through there, as the fire hadn't got up so far; and I came out of the hole with you on my back."

"A hazardous enterprise it was for you."

"Not much, it just singed my whiskers a little mite," smoothing the red crop as he spoke.

Miss Bunt now entered the room, and after tenderly inquiring how Walter felt, she seated herself near Mrs. Dalvane, and said in a tone strangely kind for her:

"How did you happen to be downstairs when the fire occurred? It is a wonder that you were saved. How glad the doctor will be when he knows you are here."

"I retired about half-past ten," answered Mrs. Dalvane. "I had been in bed about an hour when I began to feel ill. I arose, dressed, and descended to procure some medicine. I drank that, and not feeling able to go upstairs immediately, I reclined upon the lounge, and of course must have gone to sleep, although I intended to ascend in a few minutes. It is a sad, and night to me. I appreciate your kindness, but oh, it seems so mortifying to me to be dependent." And Mrs. Dalvane placed her handkerchief to her eyes, to stem the tide of tears that would flow.

The loquacious Simpkins turned away, and appeared to be deeply and suddenly interested in a book.

"There, there, dear lady, do not grieve," said Miss Bunt, with evident earnestness and feeling; "you are doubly welcome here; this shall be your home."

"You are very kind. Heaven has been good to provide me friends in this extremity," murmured the persecuted and forbearing Mrs. Dalvane.

"You must be as happy as you can. Consider everything in this house at your command, and act accordingly. Be at home, do not feel sad," continued Miss Bunt.

"But the doctor—"

"There, there," again interrupted Miss Bunt. "Do you know the very last words of the doctor as he dashed down the road, were:

"Remember Mrs. Dalvane; do everything that you can for her."

"I'll venture to say that he told me that a dozen times, and he meant it; he's a Christian, he is, if he ain't a long-faced church-goer," concluded Miss Bunt, very emphatically.

"I deeply appreciate the doctor's kindness; indeed, I cannot express my feelings; I—"

"I know all about it," interrupted Miss Bunt, for the third time. "I know how you feel; you are sensitive, I can see that. I can understand your feelings, but I don't want you to let one of those thoughts enter here; this is your home."

And to impress it more fully, she clasped Mrs. Dalvane's hands within her own, and continued:

"And as such I want you to consider it. The carriages and all other things are at your service whenever you want them, and that shall be often, too—no, don't speak—you need the air, and a brisk ride, even if it is a little cool, will do you good. Now once for all, I desire you to remember that you are mistress here, and I am at your command."

The tears stood in Mrs. Dalvane's eyes as the good though unrefined little woman closed her ejaculative speech, and she said:

"You are a good friend, Miss Bunt; I shall remember this."

"It's the young doctor, not me. He is the best man living, if I do say it," reiterated Miss Bunt.

Josh now arose, and approaching Miss Bunt, said in his peculiar way:

"You've been sour to me, Miss Bunt, but you are a whole-souled woman after all."

She stood gazing at him a moment, and then said:

"Who asked you for soft soap, I'd like to know?" Josh returned her look, and answered:

"Yeou air a nice crittur, yeou air, a reg'lar contradickshun; as sweet as a grape yeou air."

Miss Bunt subsided.

Mrs. Dalvane, who understood the irritable little housekeeper, only smiled; and, after a few moments' conversation, it was proposed that Walter should be removed to his bed, which proposition was carried into execution by Josh, who lifted him very gently, and in a short time he was snugly ensconced between the whitest of sheets, and in as good a bed as man ever reclined upon.

In a short time the little party broke up, and all retired to their respective couches.

Mrs. Dalvane, even in this the most appalling circumstance, except that of death, or blindness, that could have occurred, felt comparatively quiet, and rested calmly, something quite rare for her.

Thus a few days passed, Walter gradually recovering from his wounds, and his mother passing the time far more pleasantly than she had hoped for. Miss Bunt was very kind and respectful to Mrs. Dalvane and Walter, but took occasion to snap up Simpkins whenever she saw a chance. He had gone away for one night and day, and returned again,

which spoiled Miss Bunt's prophecy to the contrary. He was a curious character, but a jovial one.

Thus our friends were well situated in Doctor Rowe's mansion when another arrival brought a fresh addition to their circle.

CHAPTER XLVI.

In the large sitting-room of the Rowe mansion were Mrs. Dalvane, her son, and Miss Bunt, not forgetting garrulous and good humoured Josh Simpkins, who sat near the fire apparently engaged in deep meditation.

How strange it is that out from what we consider our greatest calamities our blessings flow. This was illustrated in Mrs. Dalvane's improved appearance; her face seemed less sad, and she was dressed newly and neatly. The latter change had been effected by Miss Bunt, who had had dressmakers and tailors at work, and now both of her guests appeared and acted like themselves again.

Walter's recovery had been far more rapid than they had expected, and he was now able to sit up a portion of each day, although at times he was very weak.

To receive apparel, shelter, and subsistence from a comparative stranger, was very galling to a woman of Mrs. Dalvane's natural pride and independence. But hard, cruel circumstance forces mortals to do things that are not pleasant, and serves to wear away pride as the constant rushing of waters wears rock.

Miss Bunt had been so kind, and urged these things upon her in such a way—as if they belonged to her, and were not gifts—that it seemed to dissipate half the mortification and feeling of dependence, and like a sensible woman, she was thankful for what she had, and caviled not at the sacrifice of personal feelings.

Winter was just treading upon the retreating feet of autumn. The trees and shrubs wore the desolate appearance that denotes the near approach of the Frost King. The heavens were obscured by gray clouds which seemed laden with snow; while the air, chilling and still, augured its coming.

As Mrs. Dalvane gazed out upon the gloomy scene, the question arose in her mind: "Where should we be now if not for the kindness of our friends?" The question only caused her to appreciate more fully her condition, and she determined to drive away all disturbing thoughts.

The silence which had hung over the little circle was now broken by Walter, who said:

"I thought I heard a carriage come up the avenue; am I right, Josh?"

"Yeou air. We've got company, hain't we, Miss Bunts?"

She did not seem especially pleased at this, his favourite corruption of her name; but, frowning at him, arose and looked out of the window.

"Yes," she said, "it is a young lady. I wonder who she is?"

She was now joined by Walter, and as his eye rested upon the graceful figure, his face lighted up with an expression of joy, and he exclaimed:

"Mother, it is Nina Eldon!"

Mrs. Dalvane tried to appear pleased, but if the truth must be told, she did not feel particularly gratified at receiving company. The knowledge that she was not in her own house, and the constraint consequent upon that fact, placed her ill at ease. However, she saw that Walter was gratified, and that was quite enough. She endeavoured to make him happy, at all events.

"I'll jess take myself out o' here," mused Josh; "I'm bashful afore gals!"

"You bashful," sneered Miss Bunt, "you bain't got no more bashfulness than an elephant!"

At this Josh grinned, and, arising, proceeded to answer Miss Bunt, when the door opened and Miss Eldon was announced, which caused him to make for his corner with all possible speed:

"Why, my dear Mrs. Dalvane, how do you do?" exclaimed Nina, in her childlike manner, as she ran towards her friend, clasped both her hands, and affectionately kissed her. Nina was very demonstrative.

In a moment she continued:

"Oh, what a dreadful time you have had! I was so frightened when I heard of it—and you right in the midst of it! Oh, dear! I am so glad you are safe—oh!"

Here, from sheer necessity, Nina paused to take breath, and during the interval she was introduced to Miss Bunt.

"And I was away—oh, I wish I had stayed at home! But I don't suppose I could have done any good. And Walter—poor Walter, they tell me, is severely injured. I do wish I had been at home, to have helped to take care of him."

"So do I!" And the young gentleman moved forward, to the astonishment, confusion, and deep discomfiture of the young lady, who had not imagined him within hearing. She stammered, blushed, and then said:

"I am glad to know of your convalescence, Mr. Dalvane."

The tone was reserved and distant, probably to nullify the unguarded speech of a moment before. He bowed, and slipped back to his couch in an alcove of the room, and before which curtains were hung, that he might sleep when he chose. He was upon the couch when she entered, and consequently was obscured from her view.

As Miss Bunt observed the attention Nina paid to Mrs. Dalvane, she mumbled to herself: "Humph, she's lovesick!"

"And did your son save you?" continued Nina, the ruddy colour not yet having faded from her face. "Yes," answered Mrs. Dalvane, "to him and to another is due the saving of my life, otherwise I should have perished."

"Who is the other?"

"Mr. Simpkins?" "Yes, marm, yeours 'bediently,'" responded Josh, coming forward with an awkward bow.

"Allow me, Miss Eldon, to present to you one of my best friends; the saviour of myself and son," said Mrs. Dalvane, with as much courtesy and gratitude as though he was a lieutenant-general.

Josh dropped his hat, stooped to pick it up, mumbled a "how-d'ye-do-miss?" and then lost his balance and rolled over upon the floor.

The word "clown!" escaped Miss Bunt's lips very audibly.

Miss Eldon repressed her excited risibilities, and as Josh scrambled to his feet, she remarked:

"It must have required great nerve and fortitude, Mr. Simpkins, to have successfully accomplished such a perilous enterprise in face of such overwhelming danger."

Josh looked at her very comically and then answered:

"I don't understand Dutch."

"You are disposed to be facetious," she returned.

"No I ain't, for I'm bothered if I know what that air is. You'll excuse me, miss, but I ain't much up in furrin' langidges."

Mrs. Dalvane, who could not imagine why Nina was using such high-flown language, was not at all surprised or sorry at this fitting and merited rebuke.

"Pray excuse me," she said, extending her hand, to the infinite disgust of Miss Bunt, and continued: "You and I must be friends, for I think a great deal of Mrs. Dalvane, and I know you do—your hand—there is that settled."

"Don't rattle things so; 'tain't settled, I say. Fustly neow, yeon must agree to call me Josh; when I get to be an agent, or merchant's clerk, or some such great man as that air, why, mister; but nowt it won't dew, dew yeon understand?"

"I think I do," answered the young lady, vastly amused, "and will agree to the conditions."

"That's all right then," returned Josh, with one of his grins.

Miss Bunt had done a deal of thinking while the diplomatic colloquy was in progress between Nina and Simpkins.

"She is a bold girl," thought Miss Bunt; "what would folks have said to see gals act so when I was young? Marcy sakes, the parson would have given 'em a lecture, the deacon made a big fuss, and there would have been a church meeting! Oh, these gals now-a-days, how they do act; they run after the boys, meet 'em half way, and do all the courting. The age is growing wicked; heaven knows what'll come of it, I don't. Heigho! I s'pose I might have had a husband if I had run after a man; but I didn't, no I didn't, thank heaven!"

And with this concluding reflection, caused by seeing Nina and Walter enter into conversation, she arose, and started for the kitchen. It was a noticeable fact that Miss Bunt always severed her train of thought at the marriageable point. There was a tender spot in her composition, and she, like other spinsters, probably regretted opportunities thrown away.

"I am afraid," remarked Nina, unconsciously taking up Miss Bunt's thoughts, "that the housekeeper, so staid, prim, and sober, will think that I am very wild."

"You need have no fears," replied Walter. "It is true, that she is very circumspect, and old maidish; but she has a good heart, and is very gentle."

"I do not doubt it," rejoined Nina. "The most light-hearted have their troubles. I do not believe that an old maid or bachelor ever existed who remained single from motives of pure choice. There is always a cause. I have noticed that bachelors are generally cynics, and old maids as a rule are sour and crabbed, though at times something will touch the heart that has so long been hidden."

"You will excuse me, Miss Eldon, but I never saw a young lady who possessed such a light, happy, careless nature, and intermingled with it good common sense and observing discrimination; it is rarely that those qualities are centred in one person."

"I am glad you think so. I cannot call your words flattery, for I give you credit for saying what

you mean," she replied, in her sincerity, innocent of the ambiguity of the words, and the compliment they conveyed.

"If I were to advance an opinion," said Mrs. Dalvane, smilingly, "I should say that you were both trying to compliment each other in the most scientific manner."

"Indeed, I never thought of such a thing," asseverated Walter.

"Nor I either," echoed Nina.

"I am glad you are both so free from craft," answered Mrs. Dalvane.

"Oh, Walter—there, I beg your pardon, I am very forgetful; I——"

"Allow me, Miss Eldon, to request that you continue to call me so. Mister sounds too ceremonious between friends."

Nina hesitated, then said, while the blushes mantled her face:

"Will you call me Nina?"

"Do you really desire it, or is it a return of my question for the sake of courtesy?"

"Do you doubt my sincerity?" she asked.

"You know I do not, Nina."

"Thank you, Walter."

The young man was pleased, and his face showed it. Those expressive features could not dissemble. "What were you about to say?" he remarked, addressing Nina, who essayed to speak, and then paused.

"Oh, I was going to ask you if that picture was burned?"

"No, I am very happy to say that it was in this house at the time of the dread disaster."

"Oh, I am glad; I was hoping it was safe."

Directing their gaze to the opposite side of the room they saw Josh standing bent forward, his hand upon his lips, and a comical, gratified expression upon his face, while his eyes were riveted upon some object outside.

"What is it, Josh, you seem immensely pleased," said Walter.

"Yes, Josh, tell us," interposed Nina.

In a few moments the door was thrown open, and the groom announced a visitor.

Mrs. Dalvane and Walter raised their eyes, and before them, hat in hand, stood Clarence Ormsby.

For a moment neither spoke. Surprise held them speechless. Mrs. Dalvane repressed the lump that seemed to rise from her heart to her throat, and tried to smile.

Josh was the first one to relieve them, and he did so by exclaiming:

"Give me your hand, my boy. I'm glad to see you again!"

Clarence returned the grasp of the honest Simpkin's hand, and then advancing to Mrs. Dalvane, said:

"This is indeed a pleasure; I had no thought of finding you. Your sudden removal quite surprised me. I am most happy to see you."

Mrs. Dalvane returned his salutation with all the sincerity and cordiality that her beating heart would permit.

Then he greeted Walter, and was introduced to Miss Eldon.

A few moments of conversation ensued, during which time he was informed of the conflagration and the consequent destruction of their home, which he listened to with interest, and expressed his condolence in heartfelt and suitable language.

Then the subject which was nearest his heart, and for which he had made his journey, and out of politeness he had thus far suppressed, came to his mind, and he said, in as steady a tone as possible:

"I suppose the doctor is visiting his patients?"

"No, indeed; haven't you heard?" answered Walter.

"Heard what?" ejaculated Clarence.

"Oh, don't be alarmed. I thought you knew it; he has gone to Liverpool."

"To Liverpool?" echoed Clarence, astounded.

Then cooling himself with an effort, he continued, in a moderate tone of voice:

"How long has he been gone?"

"About three weeks and three days."

Clarence was silent. He knew not what to make of this intelligence.

"Why did Rowa go without informing him previous to his departure?"

While he was thus meditating, Miss Bunt entered, and was introduced to the new-comer by Walter.

"You have probably heard the doctor speak of me?" remarked Clarence. "I believe I enjoy the honour of being his most intimate friend."

Nina softly whispered to Walter, and asked him if this was not the brother of the young lady whose portrait he had unconsciously painted. He answered that it was.

"Indeed I have," responded Miss Bunt, in reply to Clarence's observation. "In fact, your name was very often mentioned by him, during the two weeks preceding his departure. He would come down to breakfast, and say to himself, 'I wonder if I shall hear from London to-day?' and so it went

on from day to day, until I imagine he thought you had forgotten him," she concluded, with the slightest tinge of reproach in her tone.

Clarence was amazed. He looked at her searching for a moment, and then returned:

"Pardon me; but do you mean to tell me that the doctor has not heard from me for two or three weeks preceding his departure?"

"I certainly do," she rejoined, in her turn surprised. "Furthermore that he wrote to you twice a week."

"What?" he exclaimed, his amazement increasing.

"I should like to know the meaning of this?"

"The meaning of what?" asked Miss Bunt, with some asperity in her tone.

"Why, I have only heard from him once, and he has written twice a week; that is indeed strange."

"And he has not heard from you either," added Miss Bunt.

"And I wrote twice each week," returned Clarence, growing perplexed as he grew enlightened.

"Well, well, it's all a riddle; it'll take a bigger head than mine to unravel the tangle," she returned, with something like a yawn.

"It's confoundedly funny," muttered Josh, who had thus far kept silence. "I should think the captain of the department better pull some of his post-masters over the coals."

"A good idea, Josh—a good idea," mused Clarence, who felt that he must say something.

"Can you account for the irregularity in any way?" asked Walter.

"None," he answered.

And he might have added:

"It saddens and provokes me," but he didn't, and dismissing the subject he entered into conversation.

CHAPTER XLVII.

In a few moments Josh began delving into his pocket with so much earnestness, that it attracted the attention of the whole company. Especially did Miss Bunt gaze at him with an ironical glance, and when he drew forth from among the deep recesses of his pouch, a heavy, stupendous silver watch, which looked as though it might originally belonged to the Lilliputians who assailed Gulliver, and by them used as a town clock, her expression deepened to one of vexedness and contempt.

Slowly he drew the massive timepiece from his pocket, placed it in the palm of his hand, which it nearly filled, glanced at it, and looking up to Miss Bunt with the most provoking and sarcastic smile, drawled out:

"Here yeon! I say, Miss Buntair, ain't that air roast beef done yet? Ain't you hungry? I am."

The manner in which this was said, taken with Miss Bunt's expression as she heard it, brought a spontaneous roar of laughter from the company. Miss Bunt arose very quickly from her seat, and casting at him a withering glance, she snapped:

"You would create a famine. You dream of eating while you sleep, and eat all the time when you are awake, you glutton!"

If there was any amusement Josh delighted in, it was in tormenting Miss Bunt, and he most assiduously improved every opportunity that presented itself. As she left the room, he lay back, and gave expression to several loud guffaws.

Clarence, who was not at all acquainted with Miss Bunt's peculiarities, looked from one to the other inquiringly. Walter immediately explained, and Clarence bowed his acknowledgments.

In a short time Miss Bunt returned, and politely invited them to dinner.

Walter offered his arm to Nina. Clarence escorted Mrs. Dalvane to the table, and Josh stood alone and desolate.

He cast his eye upon Miss Bunt, who stood a few paces from him. With ape-like gravity, and in the most awkward fashion, he advanced and offered her his arm.

She drew back very indignantly, and exclaimed:

"Not at all, sir! I'd have you understand, sir, that I am able to walk alone, and have been for some years."

"That's plain enough—several years, eh, Miss Buntair?"

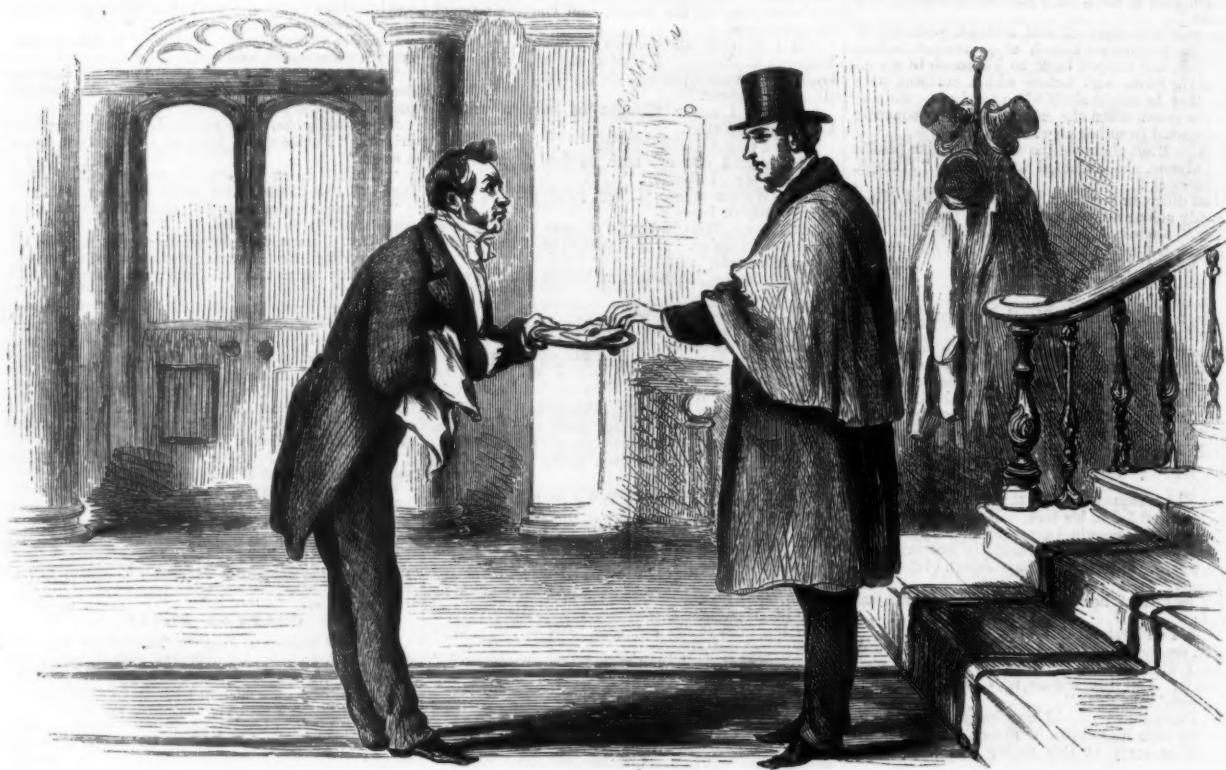
She glared at him, but said nothing.

The dinner passed off very pleasantly, without any remarks from Josh, who professed to attend to the savoury viands that were spread so lavishly before him.

After dinner, Clarence proposed to start for his home, but Miss Bunt would not listen to such a proposition; and, supported by the other entreaties, Clarence could not well refuse, and accordingly remained.

At four o'clock in the afternoon Miss Eldon took her departure, having enjoyed herself very much. In the warmest tones, she begged of Mrs. Dalvane to come and see her, and then bid them adieu.

Walter saw the fair girl depart with regret. Each visit seemed only to strengthen his regard for her. That one sentence, "I wish I had been there to take



[THE LETTER.]

care of him," told him more than he had dared to hope for. The sentiment was good and womanly, and the young man treasured it in his heart.

The doctor's own room was already in order, and after a sociable and pleasant evening, Clarence retired to his chamber to think over the revelations of the day.

"So strange!" he murmured. "Yet I might have known that Florence was right. Rowe is good and noble—how foolish I made myself!"

Throwing himself upon the bed and lighting a cigar, he continued his soliloquy:

"Dear Floss! I suppose she is thinking of me, and wondering what I have learned. I wish I could see her and tell her."

As these words escaped his lips, he turned towards the wall; his gaze was transfixed for a moment, and then, leaping from his couch, he exclaimed:

"Am I asleep? Do I dream? My own sweet sister gazing down upon me?"

He stood a moment, with eyes riveted upon it.

"It is canvas, but the artist was inspired. Who in the world can it be? It seemed for an instant as if those eyes moved, and the curls tossed. It is a perfect production—perfect—perfect! Where did Charley get it?"

Still he gazed upon it, murmuring:

"What injustice I did Rowe; here is the picture over his bed, and he anxious, pained, because I did not write. Who could have intercepted or purloined our letters, for one of those things was done? Mystery upon mystery!"

He stopped.

"Could it have been Luke? No," he thought, "he never saw Rowe—he never knew anything of him."

Then his thoughts reverted to the picture, and he thought long and deeply upon Rowe's sudden departure.

"Why did he not let me know? What has he gone for?" and, weary at last with thinking upon these questions, he fell asleep.

His first words, after exchanging the customary morning salutations, were in relation to the portrait.

Mrs. Dalvane turned pale; she trembled, but by superhuman efforts, controlled herself.

"It is a long story," said Walter, in reply. "I will relate it to you after breakfast."

Inpatient was Clarence to hear it, and as soon as possible he was gratified.

When told, with that modesty that characterised Walter, that he was the artist, and painted it from a dream, part of which he repeated to Clarence, the latter was overjoyed, and starting up, exclaimed:

"My dear Walter, you are destined to rival the old masters—a glorious future is before you! Now, can you paint another like it?"

"I am afraid not," replied Walter.

Clarence's countenance fell. Walter, seeing his disappointment, said:

"I will try my utmost; if I fail, you need not take it."

"I am sure you can," answered Clarence. "As your implements were destroyed by fire, I will procure everything for you in London, and send it on. No thanks—listen to me—here are two hundred to begin with. I will give you a thousand pounds for the picture when it is completed."

Walter's eyes grew moist. He grasped Clarence's hand, and held it a moment. Neither spoke—both knew the other's feelings.

Clarence stated his intention of leaving for London, and though all were sorry to have him depart, they knew that his business necessitated it. Mrs. Dalvane liked him, but his name was a chill to her very soul.

With many adieux the young man entered the carriage, and the horses' heads were turned towards Brakewell.

Again he had gone, and Mrs. Dalvane felt relieved, and settled down into the quiet life that was peculiarly hers.

The next morning Miss Bunt had a new sensation. Mr. Simpkins had disappeared again, and as mysteriously as at first; this afforded Miss Bunt a fine field for her power of invective, and religiously she kept good her reputation in that respect.

And all this time not a word from Rowe.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

With the greatest haste, as the reader is well aware, had Charles Rowe departed from his home upon receipt of the mystic letter. And with as much haste and anxious expectation had he travelled until he reached London.

A wild excitement possessed him; his nerves were strained, his mind wrought up with the great object that he was striving for. Should he succeed? Should he meet and clasp his mother to his arms? If, indeed, such bliss was to be his, all his aims in life would be accomplished. Florence—fame—honour—everything seemed to hang upon this contingency.

He came to no state approximating to quietude, he endeavoured to think calmly upon the question that had so agitated his mind, but the languor and indisposition that invariably succeeds intense excitement, confused his mind, rendered it unfit for reflection, and from sheer exhaustion he fell into a troubled sleep.

The next morning brought with it the surmises,

conjectures, and probabilities, upon which his fate seemed suspended. Success in his search would blot out all ideas of crime, raise him in his own esteem, and—oh, sweet thought!—leave his parent's name pure and undefiled.

It was a worthy, a noble object, and one calculated to produce many hours of ceaseless thought, irritation and impatience. Irritation at the time that must intervene, at the seeming slowness with which the train moved, and impatient for the hour to draw near when he should arrive at his destination. And then his mind soared higher, grasped for more, reached farther into futurity, and pictured his meeting with her—his mother. Oh, sweet, beguiling day-dreams! how lovely, how rosy-coloured, yet how mocking and delusive! What a leap his heart gave, when he gazed with longing eyes upon Liverpool.

Now his feverish expectation again burst forth with new power, and he was not a reasonable man until he had become a guest at the "Queen's Arms," and knew that he could make no progress that night, in consequence of a drenching rain which poured down in torrents.

He slept but little after he retired, the thoughts of his mission keeping him wide awake, and he arose on the following morn nervous and unrefreshed.

The weather was decidedly cold, and Rowe, in his hurry, had neglected to take a winter overcoat. The consequence was that he was obliged to wait two days to have one made. This was another annoyance.

On the evening of the second day the garment was sent to him. He surveyed it approvingly—a thick, genteel coat, with a heavy cape, à la militaire. He determined to go out that very evening.

As he passed out, a waiter intercepted him, saying:

"Mr. Rowe?"

"The same," returned Rowe, halting.

"A letter for you, sir, just received," and the obsequious lackey presented it to him with a bow and a flourish à la Anglais.

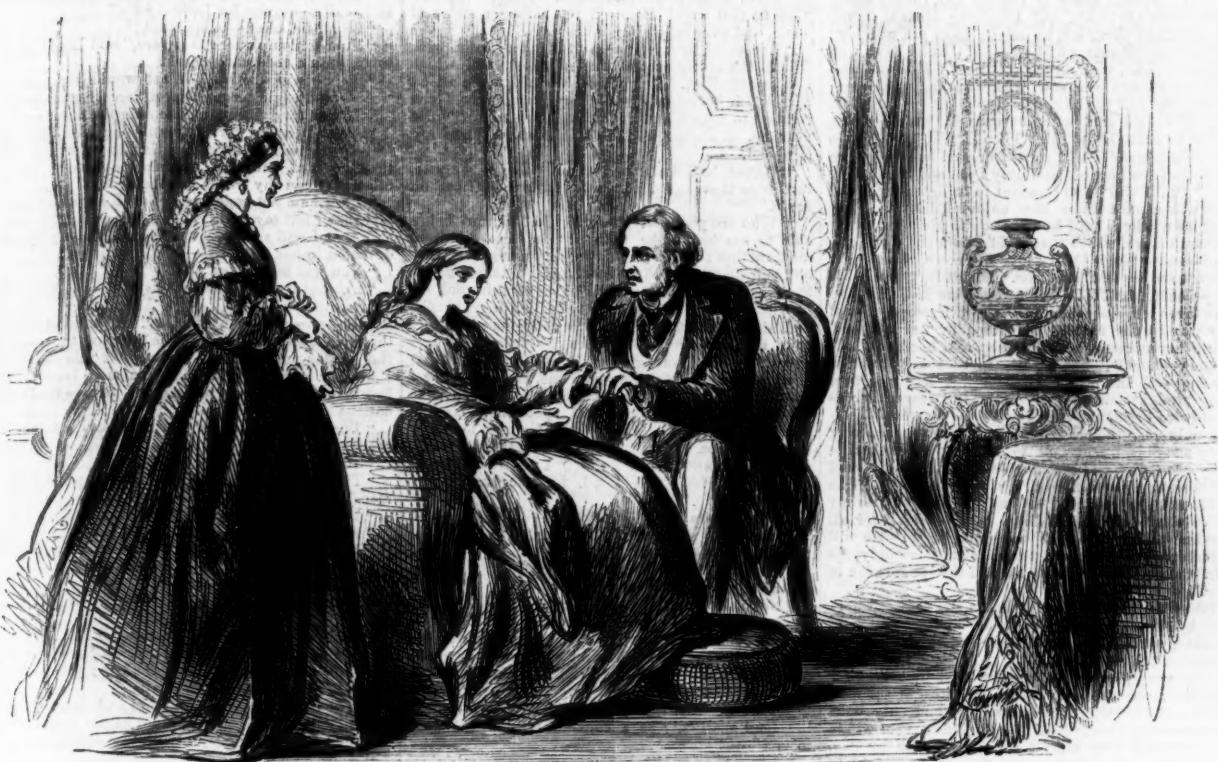
He took it mechanically, dropped a shilling into the waiter's hand, and hastened back to his room to peruse the missive undisturbed.

Throwing himself into a chair, and tearing the envelope to pieces in his hurry, he unfolded it and eagerly devoured its contents. It read thus:

"Come to the cathedral at the corner of King and Birch Streets, at the hour of nine this evening. There I will unfold the first. Work has yet to be done. I shall stand in the second arch, on the left of the main entrance. Fail not, as you value your happiness.

MINNA."

(To be continued.)



[THE MEMORY OF THE PAST.]

THE SHELL GATHERER.

BY THE

Author of "The Crown Jewels," "Alfred, the Gipsy," &c., &c.

CHAPTER VII.

The scenes upon the archery ground at Castle Montengle, which closed so painfully, and almost tragically, as narrated in the chapter preceding, had been passed full three weeks, when Radnor Cathcart, now Lord Cranstown, by the recent death of his father, rode towards the gate. He was arrayed in deep mourning, and his haughty countenance was subdued; partly, it may be, with grief at his father's decease; partly, perhaps, with regret and shame at the disgraceful part he had enacted on the day of the *fête*.

He had immediately on the occurrence of the calamity which had stricken the lovely Agnes with total loss of sight, after a confused and brief attempt to apologise, mounted his horse and galloped off, followed by the execrations of the people.

He did not believe that she was blind, and with arrogant confidence, said, half-aloud, as he dashed farther from the scene:

"She will see well enough to-morrow. It is only a temporary shock of the nerve."

Nevertheless, he was uneasy, and the following morning despatched a messenger to learn her condition. The reply was in a note by the hand of the countess:

"Unhappy young man! Your uncontrollable temper has ruined Agnes for ever. She is pronounced by the surgeon totally blind. Heaven and your own conscience have mercy upon you! Agnes forgives—but the earl will not hear your name."

Upon reading this, Radnor became nearly insane. He was deeply attached to Agnes, and loved her with more ardour than he ever manifested towards any earthly object.

His father, being at this time rapidly declining, drew off his thoughts in some degree from Agnes, and his death, two weeks after the *fête*, overwhelmed him with grief.

At length, having paid the last filial honours to the noble dead, he determined to present himself at the castle and solicit the pardon of the earl and countess, and in person, receive the forgiveness, scarcely to be realised by hope, of the lovely girl whom he had deprived of sight.

It was late in the afternoon when he drew rein near the gate, and the evening sun was casting the long shadows of the trees far across the level lawn. Between the gate and a group of oaks was a shaded

rock, from beneath which gushed, cool and clear, a spring of water, which flowed across the park in a bubbling brook, and finally lost itself, six miles distant, in the sea not far from the tower. In the shade of the rock sat an old woman, with gray hair hanging loosely about her shoulders, and dressed in a sort of Spanish style. Her head was bound about above her hard and wrinkled temples by an orange-coloured shawl. Her eyes were deep-set and bright as stars, while an expression of cunning in them were in keeping with the subtlety about her mouth. Her looks wore evil and misanthropic, and if she ever loved her kind, such emotions seemed now altogether extinguished in her soul.

The young nobleman regarded her with surprise and curiosity. The road led by the spring, which was within a hundred yards of the castle well. As he drew near and was riding past, at a slow walk, with his eyes fixed upon her, she rose from the spring side and advanced quickly, so as to intercept his path. His horse stopped and turned half round with alarm at so wild an apparition.

"Who and what are you, and why do you stand thus in my way? Aside! or I will ride over you!" he cried, between anger and superstitious dread.

"Nay, my lord, a young and new lord will not stain his fresh and noble name with maiming a poor old woman."

"You know me, but I never saw thee before! Thou art a witch, at the very least, or thy looks belie thee."

"Men think old age and witchcraft in women go together, my lord," she said, with a sneer and laugh. "I can tell fortunes, nevertheless."

"I want not mine! Begone!"

"Thine is already told! A titled lord and a blind bride!"

"Out upon thy foul tongue!" he exclaimed with a fierce cry, as he attempted to reach her with his riding whip.

"Nay, my good lord! You need not foam and fret. It becomes not thy sable garments nor thy nobility. Hear me patiently. I will tell thee what, after thou art wedded to this blinded bride—"

"Witch—silence!"

"Peaceful, my lord! After thou art wedded and learn the secret I can now tell thee, thou wouldst give half thy gold that thou hadst listened to me now."

"Ah, what then? What hast thou to tell?" he cried, eagerly.

"Thou lovest her?" she asked, or rather asserted.

"Well?"

"Blind?"

"Woman, you willadden me! Yes, blind. I love her—for I made her so!"

Hero his face suddenly paled, and he seemed deeply moved.

"And you go now to cast yourself at her feet, I daresay! But what wilt thou with a sightless wife? She will ever be a present reproach. You will by-and-by hate her rebuking eyes, that never look out of their darkened windows. All who see her will talk of thy deed of passion. Thou canst not take her to court—thou caust never love her. She will be a fixed column in thy hall, and thou canst never stir from her side. Thy days will be those of a captive, and by-and-by you will say with Cain, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear.'"

"Woman, what picture is this you so maliciously paint?"

"The prophetic future!"

"I begin to fear to make her my bride. Your words impress me."

"You believe her to be the daughter of the noble lord of this castle?"

"And truly so!" he said, with surprise.

"Falsely so!" she answered, significantly.

"What is it thou sayest?"

"That the fair Agnes, now blind Agnes, is not the daughter of this noble house!"

"What do you tell me? What evil speech is this?"

"Ask them!" added the woman, firmly.

Lord Cranstown appeared impressed by her manner, and said:

"Whose daughter is she, if thou sayest truly she is not theirs?"

"Mine!"

"Thy child?"

"Aye. Am I not a woman? May I not be a mother as well as the noblest countess in the land? The girl is mine!" added old Alice, with a loud and determined voice.

"What you say is false!"

"Go in and ask my lord and my lady," she answered, scornfully.

"And if thou liest, I will have thee hanged!" he cried, as he rode rapidly towards the gate of the castle.

"And if I speak truly, will thou wed her and become my brave son-in-law?"

"Never—though she saw with the eyes of an archangel!" was the young nobleman's haughty response.

CHAPTER VIII.

"THERE is one sweet act I have done for my be-

loved! He will cease to trouble her, for by going down upon his knees, and humbling himself before the earl and countess, he might have yet won her; for who would marry a blind wife? But I have well rid her of him, with all his greatness. He would not wed her though she saw with angel's eyes. So—good—she will yet be mine. I will have her all to myself, for the earl will not care to have her long when he shall know all. Then I will keep her in my own house. I will watch her, and be eyes to her. She can't see how old and ugly I am and won't hate me. Oh, it will be so pleasant to be loved by someone who cannot know how unloving I look. They call me a witch, but I have not quite given up all my human nature. I love that child I took out o' the sea, and because she is blind I love her more, because she cannot see me and hate me. No bridegroom, noble or peasant, shall take her away from me. Already she loves me, and when, last night, I secretly found my way by the terrace, and stood by her bed, and, while her attendants were asleep, told her her whole history—how I risked my life to take her from the roaring sea, and how I was robbed of her, and how they brought her to this castle and reared her as their own child, and how I had been for years thinking only one thought, and that about her, having only one object, and that to find her again, loving only one thing, and that her sweet image—she shed tears out of her beautiful but sightless eyes. She could not see how old and ugly I was, and as my voice was kind, I might have been an angel for all she knew. There enters the young lord! He will soon learn the truth, and then I shall have only the earl and countess between me and the possession of her."

So soliloquised the old dame, as she reseated herself by the spring, and continued her occupation of washing certain medicinal plants which she had gathered in the forest.

The young nobleman was ushered by a servitor into the room where the Earl of Monteagle sat with a sad and troubled countenance. He had only half-an-hour before come from the darkened room where the countess kept almost ceaseless watch by day, with Agnes. She had sent for them to unfold to them what had been revealed in the midnight interview which Dame Alice had had with her.

When they entered, she was seated in an armchair by the lattice. A faint ray of light fell upon her brow, which was pale as alabaster. Above the right temple was visible a slight scar. Her eyes appeared perfectly natural, and perhaps were more bright than was natural, but they were like eyes exquisitely made by art. There was in them no expression—out of them looked forth no soul. Her face was touchingly lovely, and upon her features was impressed sad and gentle submission.

It was a touching spectacle. The earl's eyes filled with great tears, and sitting down by her, he took her hand in his and kissed her with deep affection.

"My noble and good lord!" began Agnes.

But she was interrupted quickly and with surprise:

"It is I, your father, dear child!"

"I know it, dear father—you are my father and you my mother, indeed! but I know my story. I am not your child!"

Both the noble pair started and exchanged glances of inquiry and of pain.

"How did you learn this? Who hath told you the secret we would for ever have concealed?" asked the countess, earnestly.

"You shall know, my dear parents—my more than father and mother! Last night I was laying awake, for a slight pain within my eyes kept me from sleeping. I told my watchers to sleep, and if I needed them I would call. I lay between waking and sleeping, and seemed to be carried in my thoughts to a beautiful land, where I saw birds of the most beautiful plumage, such as I never saw before; and trees of the strangest, yet most glorious description, and flowers of fragrance and beauty that were unknown to me. There were fields and woodlands, and a noble villa; but all unlike anything I ever saw. Even the skies were bluer and more lovely, and the soft air did not appear like the air I knew before. I was gazing upon the scene, it seemed to me, from a rosy cloud, not far above it, when an indescribably lovely being, with four wings, all of gold, and blue, and purple feathers, appeared suddenly before me. The face of this noble angel, as I thought it was, looked backward continually, and could not turn her face forwards. This did not appear to surprise me in the least, nor did I consider it a deformity; but on the contrary, regarded her as the most wonderfully lovely creature imagination could conceive of.

"She addressed me, saying:

"Daughter of men, I am the angel of memory! Now that thine eyes to view the present around thee are closed, I am sent to open thine eyes of the past. Behold! what thou seest beneath thee is a scene in

the world of the past, from which I come. We call Time in that world Memory, the younger sister of Time, and ever following in her path."

"The angel then left me, and I contemplated with delight the lovely scene revealed below, and which I have described. It gradually seemed to me as if I had seen it before, and while I was wondering, I was recalled to myself and the present, by a low voice near me. I started, and felt a soft touch upon my forehead.

"Agnes, be not alarmed! I am come to see thee, for I love thee, and dearest art thou to me than all on earth."

"Who are you that speak?" I asked, not being able to see her. She then proceeded to relate to me how that I had been shipwrecked when four years old, and that she had rescued me, and taken me to the tower on the cliff, when a naval captain took me by violence from her, and conveyed me here, as she had since learned; for she was carried a great way over sea, and only after years of search has found me. She said I was given her by Providence, that she has a mother's claim upon me, and that now I am blind no one will care for me, and she will take me to a home where she will spend her days in making me happy. I have sent for you to know from your lips, my dear father, if this tale is true."

"It is," answered the earl. "This woman must have arisen from the dead, for she was surely drowned."

"No, she was saved by a boat. You confess that I am the child she saved, do you not?"

"Yes, but—"

"My, my dear father, but if it be so, this woman has indeed a claim upon me, and—"

"Not one word, dearest Agnes! You are, and shall ever be to us, our child."

"Yes, you have shown the same affection to me as if I were, and I wish I could show you my gratitude. I am now blind and helpless. You can have no pleasure or hopes in me now. I have sent for you to let me go with this good woman, who saved my life, for I shall only be a constant burden and care to you—"

"Agnes!" cried the countess, weeping and interrupting her; "dearest daughter of our hearts, do not agonise us by thus calmly talking of leaving us, and of being a burden to us! You are nearer and dearer to us than ever!"

"But my lord is soon going to Spain, as minister from the court, and you and I were to accompany him. I, helpless as I am, cannot go, and you, my dear mother, must not remain behind for me. I cannot mar your pleasure."

"We will make any sacrifice for you, self-sacrificing girl!" said the earl, passionately. "I will abandon the position, and—"

"No, my dear lord, no! Already I see I am a bar to your movements; since I am not of your name, consider me as a stranger. I willingly will go with the good woman who saved my life."

"This may not be," said the earl. "Knowing you were an orphan we loved you, and this discovery, which is only one to you, does not affect us. When did this woman visit you?"

"Last night, and left as secretly as she came. Do you know who my parents are, my father?"

"No, my dear child."

"Nor my country?"

"No. It must be England, for you spoke the purest English when we received you at the hands of Captain Manners, my brother-in-law."

"The good woman who claims me must become my mother," said Agnes, sadly but firmly. "I cannot mar your visit to Spain. You must make no such great sacrifice for me."

Both of them embraced the lovely girl, and shed tears freely. At length the earl said:

"This woman must be found! She must not trouble you again. You are our daughter, and we will not part with you."

The countess looked at her husband, and smiled. Soon afterwards, not wishing to weary the lovely patient, the earl retired, resolved, as well as was the countess, that she should be removed, as soon as it could be done, beyond the influence of the "weird woman," as he termed Dame Alice. He was found by Radnor pacing his room, and reflecting upon what had passed; for truly, as she had said, her calamity would stop his journey to the court of Madrid, to be undertaken, in a few days, by the king's command.

He looked up at the sound of footsteps, and beheld the young Lord Cranstown. He regarded him with a fixed look of displeasure, which, however, was instantly removed from his face, which assumed a cold, grave expression.

"Good even, my lord. I condole with you upon your loss. Your father I well knew. Peace to his memory!"

Thus speaking, the earl coldly waved his hand towards a chair.

"No, my lord, I will not sit. I have been so bold as to call to inquire for Lady Agnes."

"Blind, sir, blind—stone blind!"

"Your lordship's tone is severe," said Lord Cranstown, with a reddening cheek.

"So is her misfortune. What would you more?" And Monteagle turned almost fiercely upon him.

"To ask forgiveness, and to offer the atone—"

"Atone! atone for extinguishing the light of heaven from a human brain. Hast thou fetched with thee, my lord, new eyes, that she may see? In no other way can thy words have meaning."

"I see I am not welcome. But I hoped to show you that I felt my guilt. I came to assure your lordship that I will still take her to wife, and try by my devotion to her to atone—"

"You will marry her, eh?"

"I repeat it; and since she is sightless, you will appreciate—"

"Oh—ah—yes—I appreciate! You have taken the jewels, and would have me toss you the casket. But pardon me, my lord. I have felt this calamity. I may, by-and-bye, talk with you more favourably. But first I have a duty to perform. Agnes is not my daughter—she is a foundling!"

"Then the tale I heard is true indeed!" exclaimed the young man.

"What tale hast thou heard?"

"That she was the child of an old peasant woman."

"Where heard you that?"

"From her own lips."

"Well, we know not who is her mother. She is equally dear to us. She may have a better mother than the woman you speak of."

"Is she noble, my lord? Think you Agnes is noble?"

"Made so by our love and adoration!"

"I cannot marry unless it be ascertained who she is. This woman may have stolen her; yet she says she is her own offspring."

"It matters not. She is blind and helpless, and she is God's offspring, committed to our keeping."

"My lord, pardon me if I withdraw my obligation."

"What obligation?"

"That I would wed her."

"My Lord Cranstown, you add insults to deep injuries! Your horse awaits his rider. I know you now, and beg that the acquaintance here end."

Thus speaking, the earl turned from him. The young man, pale as marble and with livid lips, haughtily took his departure, leaped into his saddle, and spurred madly away towards the forest.

"How, my lord? What news? Is it not all true?" cried the weird woman, stepping from behind a tree, as he dashed past.

He gave her no other reply than a look of desperate fury, and was soon lost to sight in the depths of the woods.

Without question, Radnor Cathcart loved Agnes, but his pride of birth could not stoop to one who might be ignoble. A sense of honour might have induced him to marry one whom he had deprived of sight, but no considerations could have led him to unite to his name and house an unknown girl. If we could look into his thoughts, as he rides homewards, more slowly as he increases the distance between him and the castle, we should detect a secret satisfaction, and undefinable feeling of relief that he was not bound to marry Agnes; for, although he had been willing to make her his wife, blind as she was, in some sort to stone, as an honourable man, for the calamity he had brought upon her, yet now that the obscurity of her origin afforded him a favourable way of escaping, he gladly embraced it; for in his heart, even were she the daughter of the Earl and Countess of Monteagle, he felt no disposition to clog his life, upon which he was just entering, with a blind and helpless wife. Therefore Lord Cranstown, as he rode on, became more and more calm; and, by the time he reached his own home, he felt very lightly reconciled with the issue of his visit to Castle Monteagle.

"And this accounts for her looks of regard cast upon that low-born shell gatherer—being low-born herself; as every bird mates with its fellows! I have made an escape; and but for this accident—yet it was her own fault, in arresting my arm to save the sorf's life—but for this lucky accident I should, perhaps, have taken to wife the daughter of a peasant; nay, this old woman may have had the Earl of Cranstown as her son-in-law!"

Thus congratulating himself, the young and subtle noble resolved to banish Agnes from his thoughts, with a feeling of resentment against himself for loving one so obscure, and against Lord Monteagle for permitting him to remain in ignorance of her history.

After the departure of the young nobleman from his castle, the Earl of Monteagle, following with his eyes from the window his rapid pace, had seen the weird

women appear from among the trees and address him as he galloped past her. Instantly he left the castle by a postern on that side, and rapidly made his way to the forest.

He beheld the gray figure of the old woman moving swiftly in the direction of the ancient church. He followed and saw her disappear within the churchyard, under the shadow of the yews. He hastened forward, and came upon her as she was entering the tower, the door of which was broken from its hinges, and could not be quite closed by the old sexton.

He was upon her steps, and found her just in the act of descending beneath the chancel into the crypt of tombs. The interior of the venerable church was solemnly gloomy; and at this evening hour, when the shadows of the closing day were everywhere spreading and deepening, it had an awe-awakening aspect. He paused in the aisle as he saw her disappear, and recollecting that she had once been cast into the sea for dead, he began almost to believe that it was a spirit he had followed, rather than a living being. But he was not superstitious. He was quite convinced that this person must be the woman who had secretly visited Agnes by night; and as he had seen Dame Alice years before, when she dwelt in the tower, he had been satisfied of the identity when he beheld her hail Lord Cranstock in the forest.

He now moved swiftly and noiselessly, and found the door of the crypt open. But he need not have been so careful to conceal his approach. She had seen him following her from the first, and had purposefully led him to the church. As he was gazing down to see where she was, she struck a light, which cast a strange glare about her, as he discovered her in the empty tomb.

"Come down, my lord! This must be your home now, and you may as well familiarise your eyes with it. Enter, my Lord of Montagle. Nay, shrink not back! It is not death that invites you, but the living. This is my home."

"Art thou the woman—the—"

"I am the woman you seek."

"Wherefore do you haunt my house? What wicked notion can urge you to mar the peace of the dear child?"

"Because," she interrupted, sternly, "because the child is as dear to me as to you. She is mine, Lord Montagle! Heaven sent her to take the place of my own fair-haired one, who died when I was a young wife. I snatched the child from the waves, and became its mother. Your brother robbed me of her. I would recover her. I will take her, blind as she is, for now you care not for her. Give her to me, my lord!"

"You ask in vain. Rather would I come and lay her dead in this tomb, than give her into thy hand!"

"Dead shall she be laid in this tomb, unless thou givest her into my hand!" answered the weird woman.

"Dost thou threaten her life?"

"Nay; but her life is mine. Thou hast loved her and had her smiles for ten years, while I have wandered the world desolate. The past is thine—the future must be mine!"

(To be continued.)

THERE is to be another large tabernacle in London, for one of Mr. Spurgeon's "young men." It is to cost 12,000*l.*, and to hold 3,000 people.

PAPER petticoats are now sold in London at 6*d.* each. Imitation cretonnes and chintzes for bed furniture are also being made of the same material, as well as shoes.

MR. JARDINE, M.P., for Dumfries, is the owner of Pretender, winner of the Derby. He is known on the turf by the name of Johnstone. The largest winners by the Derby victory of Pretender are Mr. Steel, who nets between 15,000*l.* and 20,000*l.*; and Mr. Whittaker, of Manchester, who takes about 12,000*l.* Mr. Jardine (the owner of the horse) and his friends win about 10,000*l.* among them.

THE Jardin d'Acclimation in Paris has just received a present of an American tapir. This animal is about the size of a small donkey, and is remarkable for his pointed muzzle, in the form of a trunk. He is placed in an enclosure with a family of goats, and, being of a harmless nature and easy disposition, lives on good terms with his fellow captives. His great pleasure is to remain lying on his side basking for hours in the sun; the young kids then sport about him, run over him, and stand on his flank, the tapir remaining all the time perfectly unmoved; the light footsteps of the goats seem to tickle his tongue and cause him agreeable sensations.

SPORTING EXTRAORDINARY.—A correspondent informs us that a shepherd reported to his master, recently, that he had seen a deer in a wood at Rock-

bourne. Information of the circumstance was at once conveyed to the owner of the wood, and on the following day a party of four went out with guns in search of the animal. In a short time the beaters succeeded in starting the game, and "bang! bang!" went the double gun of one of the party, as an indistinct glances was caught of the animal on its passage through the underwood. The shots took effect, but on proceeding to the spot, the sportsman discovered that he had shot a calf, which no doubt had strayed from a neighbouring homestead.

ABOLITION OF IMPRISONMENT FOR DEBT.—This Bill of the Attorney-General has been amended and reprinted. The most material alteration is the extension to all debtors of some provisions which in the original Bill applied only in county courts committed. This is effected by the introduction of a new clause enacting that "any person" shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanour punishable with imprisonment for a term not exceeding a year, with or without hard labour, if he has obtained credit under false pretences, or by means of fraud or breach of trust; or if he has wilfully contracted a debt or liability without a reasonable expectation of being able to pay; or if he has, with intent to defraud his creditors or any of them, made a transfer of, or charge on, his property; or if he has, with intent to defraud his creditors, concealed or removed any part of his property since or within two months before the date of any unsatisfied judgment or order for payment of money obtained against him. The original Bill had a clause providing that on the prosecution for an offence under this Act, the accused should be entitled, if he should think fit, to be sworn and give evidence as a witness. This clause is now struck out.

SCIENCE.

LIGHOUSEES.—England has a light for every 14 miles of coast, Scotland for every 20*½* miles, Ireland one for every 34*½* miles, while France exhibits one for every 12*½* miles. The lighthouses in France are more than three times as numerous as in Scotland, compared with the amount of coast, and nearly three times as in Ireland.

POISONING STEEL ARMOUR.—If rubbed every morning with leather, will not become dull or rusty, but if the rust has been suffered to gather, it must be immediately removed by cleaning the steel with sweet oil, and allowing it to remain on for two days; then sprinkle it over with finely powdered unbleached lime, and rub it with polishing benches.

CURE FOR SOMNAMBULISM.—Professor Pellegrini, of Florence, has hit upon a cure for somnambulism. It simply consists in winding once or twice round one's leg, on going to bed, a thin flexible copper wire, long enough to reach the floor. Eighteen somnambulists treated in this way have been either permanently or temporarily cured. Copper wire is known to dissipate magnetic somnambulism, and this circumstance led the professor to have recourse to this strange remedy.

MR. E. DEUTSCH has returned to London from his Easter journey, not only richer, generally, in knowledge of Semitic countries, but with curious additions to the special knowledge of scholars in Semitic antiquities. Mr. Deutsch has deciphered the inscriptions on the "great stones" of the Temple platform, and finds them to be Phoenician masons' marks. Thus, we have an end of all doubts as to the original builders of that side of the Temple wall. They were of the age of Solomon, and probably the craftsmen of Hiram, King of Tyre. Mr. Deutsch has also recovered the lost letters of the Maccabean Hebrew alphabet. Two such "finds" rarely fall to the lot of a single traveller. It is understood that Mr. Deutsch will report on his discoveries to the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund.

PROFESSOR TYNDALT delivered his sixth lecture on light recently. He said a pure spectrum was one in which the colours did not overlap each other. The body of the sun was composed of over 2,000 substances identical with those found on the globe. Light was not transmitted to the retina by the sun itself, but by metallic vapour clouds around the sun being heated to whiteness. The flow of light was regulated by the same principles by which the waves of the sea were. Newton objected that if light were propagated by waves, shadows could not exist. When a film of variable thickness was illuminated by white light it displayed a variety of colours. Colours were produced by films of all kinds. The colours of mother of pearl were due to the concentration of rays of light on its angular figure; but its colours could be easily transferred to black sealing-wax.

BEWARE OF SYRUPS.—M. Van de Vyvere shows that there are sold syrups of raspberries and currants, in which there does not exist an atom of those

fruits. These syrups are coloured with fuchsine and curaçao, which impart splendid colour to them, but which are decidedly poisonous. By analysis it has been proved that every 200 gms. of syrup contain 5 centigrams. of fuchsine; and Drs. Ziesacher, Lotzschby, and Frederick, of Dresden, relate cases in which men employed in packing up these tintorial substances, lost their lives by having breathed the dust issuing from the parcels they were handling. The means of discovering the adulteration of syrups by the drugs in question, are easy; chlorine discolors both the genuine and adulterated article, but in the case of fuchsine it leaves a flaky residue. Caustic potash discolors the adulteration, but changes the pure fruit to dirty green.

An interesting illustration of the value of rough breastworks in the field occurred in the course of the experiments at Shoeburyness last week. Some earthworks were thrown up such as could be rapidly constructed by troops in the field, representing a small main entrenchment with some rifle-pits in front, and a hundred dummy figures of men were placed under the cover thus afforded. Thirty-six rounds of shrapnel, segment, and common shell were fired at this position from two of the excellent bronze field-guns designed for service in India, at a range of a thousand yards—so great distance in these days. By the twelve rounds of shrapnel shell one man was killed; by the ten rounds of segment shell one man was wounded; and by fourteen rounds of common shell only two men were touched. It is perhaps too much to say that the position would have been utterly untenable in face of such a fire on open ground. The last edition of the Queen's Regulations enjoins instruction in the art of entrenching; but we have not seen the order carried out.

FICTITIOUS WINE MAKING.

This art is well understood and extensively practised not only in this but in other countries. It is believed that a skilled brewer of wines can supply anything that is required, and that at a short notice. There is a story told of a celebrated consumer of wines who had a bin of a particularly fine vintage of which he was so very choice, that he only touched it on rare occasions. At last the time had arrived when it was served on his table was so greatly extended that the butler thought the wine had been forgotten, and, being like his master a lover of good things, he quietly consumed the small stock himself. One day his employer said: "Smith, I have some excellent judges coming to dinner, and we will have the wine from bin 14." Smith's horror may be conceived. He knew that the sample was unique, but, in despair, he went to his friend the wine merchant and made a clean breast of the affair. The wine merchant asked him if he had any left; fortunately there was a single bottle. This served as a sample, from which the fictitious wine was made, and it was drunk on the evening with great approbation. The bottles that were not consumed were placed in the old bin, and on opening them a few months after the wine was found to be sour and offensive. The butler expostulated with the wine merchant, who replied, indignantly: "You ordered the wine for a certain day; you had it, and it was universally approved. I did not make it to keep a week, and you had no right to serve it up again."

Not only are still wines made up in this manner, but the sparkling wines, as champagne, &c., are still more largely manufactured. All that is required is to make a liquid having a sweet vinous character, to add the required flavour, and then to impregnate with carbonic acid by the process adopted in making soda water. In this way nine-tenths of the cheap champagne drunk in this country are made, and, according to the following, from the City article of the *Times*, of May 17, we are to be inundated with a still greater quantity of these injurious beverages: "There seems likely to be a considerable increase in the manufacture of imitation 'champagnes,' 'sparkling hocks,' and 'sparkling moselles.' From a circular issued by some Belgian chemists it appears that they have patented a machine for the manufacture of such imitations. The produce can, it is stated, be sold at a franc a bottle, or less than 10*s.* per dozen, and yield a profit of more than 30*l.* upon 1000 bottles, with the additional advantage that the 'residuum' can be 'instantaneously made into vinegar.' A list is given of ninety-three houses, to whom, among others, the right to use the patent has been conceded, and, as this list is described as the third, probably the concession has also been extensively made in Germany and elsewhere. No doubt, considerable quantities of these imitation wines will find their way from France and Germany to this country, and be sold as the genuine products of Champagne, the Rhine, and the Moselle." It is hardly necessary to inform our readers that these concoctions are most deleterious.



THE COUNTESS OF SHREWSBURY: FROM THE ORIGINAL PAINTING BY SIR PETER LELY.]

FINE ARTS.

THE National Portrait Collection has just been enriched by the likeness of Anna Maria, Countess of Shrewsbury in the reign of Charles II., an engraving of which we present to our readers. The directors, wisely remembering that their undertaking is in every sense a national one, exclude from their gallery no picture of any person who has made a name, whether by good or evil deeds. In this portrait of the Countess of Shrewsbury—painted by Sir Peter Lely—the gallery can show the image of perhaps the wickedest woman that ever England produced.

She was one of the reigning beauties of the court. When the lively Grammont came over on his long visit from France, he found her sharing with the Countess of Castlemaine, and, as his biographer puts it, with Madame de Chesterfield, Mesdames Roberts, Middleton, and Brook, the supremacy in brilliancy and beauty over a hundred other pretty and witty women. The biographer's picture of the court at this time is a thing best seen at a distance. He takes us along pleasantly from intrigues to murders, as if they were the most ordinary events and occurrences of life.

The Earl of Arran was an accomplished gentleman; his brother, the Earl of Ossory, was an elevated character; Sidney was the handsomest man of his time, yet these had to become suitors for the regard which was lavished unsolicited on Jermyn, who was neither handsome, good, nor wise. Perhaps something of the success of Jermyn must be ascribed to the splendour of the style in which he lived. His adopted father, St. Albans, furnished him with an unlimited supply of money, and he no doubt found this highly useful in gilding over the gaps in his wit.

The Princess Royal was fascinated by him first;

and then the licentious Castlemaine suffered her affection for him to become so manifest as almost to embroil her with the king. The fact is, as Hamilton explains, his reputation at the English court had preceded him from France. The women were told to look for a wonder, and they found one. All kinds of women came within the circle of his influence. Mrs. Hyde, though virtuous, and advantageously married, was never satisfied until she had brought herself under his notice, and had been enrolled on the list of ladies he deigned to admire.

There was one woman, however, before whom he bowed, as others of her sex had bowed before him—the Countess of Shrewsbury. She was almost without a rival in general estimation. Jermyn made advances to her, and she received them favourably. The little man felt very happy within himself; all the happier for not knowing that he was being closely observed by Thomas Howard, brother of the Earl of Carlisle and a captain in the Guards, who accepted gallant of the lady. Captain Howard had his eye on Jermyn, but Jermyn was not aware of it, because his own eye, after it had left the one object of his affection—the Lady Shrewsbury—never fell on anything but the other—himself.

To trap Jermyn, Howard gave a little *réte* to the lady at her lodgings in Spring Gardens, and caused his rival to be privately informed of it. A grenadier was present, and played the bagpipes for the amusement of the lady and her lover. They were both very happy, when Jermyn appeared on the scene, entered without invitation into the festivities, and tried to amuse the lady by sneering at the giver of the feast. In the glances that passed between the pair Howard saw the confirmation of his jealous surmisings. He waited patiently until he had seen enough, although he was several times on the point of sacrificing the jackanapes to his fury. Jermyn withdrew, highly delighted with the result of his

impudent intrusion. The next morning he received a challenge from Howard at his lodgings. He was obliged to accept it. Howard named a second—the seconds fought together in those days as well as the principals—Jermyn named another, who happened to be the bosom friend of the gentleman his antagonist had chosen. Nevertheless, all four met. Jermyn's second was killed outright, and Jermyn himself was carried home pierced with wounds, and with very few signs of life.

Exit Jermyn from the scene. He is humbled, and he will be heard of no more in this short history. The countess does not appear to have taken his misfortune one bit to heart; or, if she did, she soon learnt to console herself by forming a new attachment. Killigrew comes next in the order of her lovers—a hair-brained fellow of the chattering sort, who went about the court bragging openly of his luck and her beauty, till the Duke of Buckingham was led to cast his eye on her, and, finally to supplant him in her affections. Killigrew became noisy, and though he did not quarrel openly with the duke, he told everybody that he was going to do so; and he maligned the countess as much as he had formerly praised her. He laid bare all her vices, and ascribed some to her which she did not possess. He even said that she was ugly. He was extremely well satisfied at the thought of having given her a Rowland for an Oliver—until one night, as he was getting in his chair, after spreading the usual stories, he was suddenly attacked by a batch of ruffians, stabbed, and left for dead. He recovered; but thenceforward he held his peace; and he divined so well who had given him the lesson, that he thought it unnecessary to make any inquiries about it, but left Buckingham in quiet possession of the prize.

The Countess of Shrewsbury's husband now enters upon the scene. He was an amiable gentleman of very retired habits. He did not live in the circle of the court, and, therefore, he heard but little of matters that were the common talk there. What did reach him he paid no regard to, until he was forced to open his eyes by the scandalous publicity of the affair between the Duke of Buckingham and his wife. He sent a challenge to the duke.

To understand what follows one must look at the woman's face. It is not a perfect index to her character—no face is—but passion, and the engrossing selfishness that sometimes springs from it, seem to have left very clear traces there.

On the day appointed, Buckingham arrived on the field of encounter, left his horse in charge of a page he had brought with him, and advanced to meet the injured husband. They crossed swords. The libertine was handier with that weapon than his antagonist, for he had doubtless had occasion to use it often in similar quarrels. The affair was brief. In a few minutes Buckingham returned to tell the page who had been watching the encounter, that the Earl of Shrewsbury was dead. The page was the earl's own wife, who had come out in disguise to see her husband killed.

There is no poetic retribution: she married a second time with a certain gentleman of Somerset, and died in her bed on the 20th of April, 1702.

DEATH OF A CELEBRATED FRENCH SPORTSMAN.

—One of the most famous sportsmen of France, M. Sallon, has just died at Lanvillon. Some time before his death he made a calculation of the quantity of game he shot during his life—not in *battues* recollect, but fairly in the open ground. In round numbers they were 5,000 hares, 10,000 rabbits, 20,000 partridges. As to smaller game, such as quails, sandpipers, &c., the numbers were incalculable. Then he slew 1,500 foxes. Thirty-six old wolves also appear in the list, and eight mad dogs. He took about fifty years to make the execution, and the money value of the game he killed is computed at about 4,000.

A SHORT-SIGHTED PRINCE.—A very pretty little misunderstanding in high quarters is affording occasion for gossip at Vienna and Berlin. The Archduke Ludwig Victor, youngest son of the Emperor of Austria, was recently travelling *incognito*, and when at Nizza learned that the Prince and Princess Charles of Prussia were staying at the same hotel. He instantly went to inquire when the prince and princess would receive a visit from him. As he was standing in the corridor making these inquiries, Prince Charles happened to pass; but as the Archduke is short-sighted, he did not recognise His Royal Highness. Prince Charles, *on dit*, was deeply offended, and returned to Berlin, stating that he had been wilfully slighted by the Archduke. If the story is true, the prince must be more easily offended than can be good for his own peace of mind.

A MODEL POLICEMAN.—The Parish of St. Ives has a model policeman, for at a meeting in support of the Permissive Bill, a few days ago, a speaker said:

"The constable had so little to do that in order to fill up his time he held a great many other offices—(laughter and applause)—such as collector of the water rate—(renewed laughter)—sanitary inspector, inspector of weights and measures, and notice server to the burial board, besides being in general attendance on the Mayor and Corporation (More laughter). He had such an amount of spare time on his hands that for years past he had devoted it to the study of arithmetic, grammar, and mathematics—(laughter)—and he was now quite a proficient in arithmetic, quite a critic in grammar, and wa—*not at all* to be despised as a mathematician, and a good teetot'ler into the bargain. (Applause.) That man was the only policeman within the borough and parish of St Ives."

WALTER SINGLETON.

CHAPTER I.

Warriors and statesmen have their need of praise,
And what they do or suffer men record;
But the long sacrifice of woman's days
Passes without a thought—without a word;
And many a holy struggle for the sake
Of duties sternly, faithfully fulfilled—
For which the anxious mind must watch and wait,
And the strong feelings of the heart be stilled—
Goes by, unheeded as the summer wind,
And leaves no memory and no trace behind!

Mrs. Norton.

THREE score and ten were the years of Morton Hastings; age had not changed the benevolent and placid expression of his countenance, nor chilled the warm and kindly feelings of his generous heart. In his character there was much to win affection, although wanting in many of the high and sterling qualities that command respect. He lacked the firmness to support adversity, and clung too eagerly to the luxuries that had surrounded him from his earliest years, shrinking from poverty as the darkest and heaviest woe that could fall to the lot of mortal. He was reputed a man of strict truth, and honoured truth-telling; he was never known to do a dishonest action, and scorned a mean one. Hitherto his life had been one of unclouded prosperity; from his father he had inherited much wealth, to which he had made large additions; the world smiled on him, and he glided through its changing scenes with few cares, and fewer sorrows.

But reverses were in store for Morton Hastings, and they came when he was least able to bear them, when the hue of his hair had changed from gray to "silver white," and his frame was bowed with something of the feebleness that gives token of approaching dissolution. He had placed his trust in a villain who had betrayed and wronged him to a great amount; other losses followed fast on impaired credit, until utter ruin seemed inevitable. He bore up manfully while there was yet a hope of retrieving his fortunes, but in vain he struggled with the serpent folds, that have borne down many a devoted merchant to the dust; the ball had turned, and every effort he made only seemed to accelerate his speed. A competency he saved for himself and child. Ah! for her sake, far more than for his own, he mourned his bereavement of fortune. Long since, his wife had died, and Alicia was left his only solace, his chief earthly comfort; that she well fulfilled the trust, might be gathered from the exceeding tenderness with which her father regarded her.

"It will be time enough for her to suffer, when hope is over," was ever that father's thought, and to the last he refrained from communicating his true situation.

Twilight was gathering over the earth as Morton Hastings turned his steps homeward; his business had been brought to a final close, and he had paid the last pound he owed. For a time, the proud consciousness that he had wronged no human being, bore him forward with a light heart and active step, but anon there came other thoughts; his child! Oh! he had nurtured her tenderly—he had guarded her, as does the sea-bird her young, lest they fall from their lofty eyrie, and be dashed to pieces—and she had well and truly repaid him; and now, she must come down from her high place, that she adored so gloriously, and take her stand among the lowly and the humble of the earth! His steps faltered, and his head bowed down upon his breast, as a feeling of despair, wrong to indulge in, and always sad in its consequences, took possession of his heart.

"Ah! *Ashley Cleveland!*" said the old man, in a tremulous tone, "is it indeed you?"

"My friend—my dear friend!" exclaimed Cleveland, as he warmly clasped the hand extended to him, "what dreadful news is this I hear? And why was I not called upon in your distress?"

"Your assistance would not have availed—why trouble you needlessly?" replied Mr. Hastings, as slowly they entered the house together. Something like a groan escaped from Hastings as he took his

accustomed seat; he held out his hands before the fire, and Cleveland noticed how they trembled.

"Is there no hope your fortunes may be retrieved?" he asked. "I will advance you any sum you require."

"No, Ashley, no," said the old man, in a tone impressively mournful, "the strength has gone out from this feeble body—look at this poor shaking hand, is it fit, think ye, to guide the barque of my fortunes through the stormy seas of existence? To steer it clear of the shoals and quicksands, that wreck their thousands in the green season of youth? There is no hope for the future—I am ruined—a beggar!"

"You cannot mean," said Cleveland, hastily, "that you are reduced to absolute poverty?"

"Oh, no!" was the answer, in tones of bitter irony, "there is enough to prevent starvation!"

"And what of Miss Hastings?" exclaimed Cleveland, with the look and tone of one to whom the subject was of absorbing interest.

"Ah, there it is!" cried the old man, his self-control entirely gone at the mention of her name. "My child, my child! what a change for you!"

And he covered his face with his hands, and the tears trickled through his trembling fingers.

"Give your daughter to me—let her be my wife—and may I suffer in the hour of my sorest need, if I do not make her a true and faithful husband," said Cleveland, as he bent down his head over the hand of Mr. Hastings, which he had taken in his own.

The sorrowing father lifted up his face, the whole expression of which had changed to amazement and pleasure.

"This is possible?" he exclaimed; "Ashley, do you love my child?"

"With my whole heart. I have loved her truly, since the first hour I saw her," was Cleveland's enthusiastic reply. "I am the son of your oldest and best friend, and the kindness with which you have treated me has almost amounted to affection.

At first, Miss Hastings manifested the same feeling, but she changed, and the coldness she then assumed has known no abatement. I have thought she might have discovered my real feelings, and wished by her manner to check them. I have also thought the motive for such conduct was love for another."

"Nonsense! Impossible!" exclaimed Mr. Hastings. "I tell you, she never yet loved a human being but her old father!"

"Then I have been mistaken, as we often are, when judging in a state of strongly excited feeling."

"Assuredly you were mistaken, if you believed Alicia loved another; no, no, my child is free. Heaven grant her heart may make selection where our wishes point so strongly," was Mr. Hastings' earnest reply.

"Wishes that must never be enforced," said Cleveland, eagerly; "she must be left to her own unbiased choice. If she cannot fully reciprocate my feelings, she must at least have no reluctance to marry me; do not urge her then, for wealth will bring happiness to neither of us without mutual affection; and all that I have I will share with you and your child, as your friend only."

"I know what I have said to be true; you can rely upon it. Alicia is timid and retiring; she has grieved for my sorrow, although I have hidden it from her, so far as it was in my power, but sad thoughts stamp their seal upon the face."

Cleveland smiled, and Mr. Hastings went on with various comments and facts to prove the truth of his belief.

A much indulged child Cleveland had been from his youth upwards, and amid many shining qualities of mind and character, there lurked the germ of an impetuous and fiery nature. About his finely-formed mouth there was an expression of scorn—slight indeed, but it was there, and when corresponding feelings filled the mind, that expression changed into haughtiness and contempt.

An hour passed and still the two held converse: well the father loved to talk of his child, and little prospect there was that his listener would tire. At length Cleveland rose to go, and the parting words of Mr. Hastings were:

"To-morrow at twelve, come to me, and you shall know her decision."

Mingled thoughts of pain and pleasure passed through the mind of Mr. Hastings, as he sat silently revolving the incidents of this eventful day; he did not hear the door open and close; he heard no step, for the carpet that stretched beneath his feet returned no footfall; but he felt the pressure of the white arm passed over his neck, the cheek, soft as an infant's, that touched his own, and he heard the sweet voice that had never spoken to him but in accents of affection, murmurings:

"Dear father, you are welcome home."

"Alicia!"

Morton Hastings drew his child to his heart, and felt he owned a treasure yet, the world could never take away. Little wonder that he loved her, in her bright, early beauty! The eyes that met his glance of affection were black, singularly soft, and winning in expression—a mouth that gave character to her whole face, with a smile playing on the lips—a woman's smile—radiant, open, trusting! Long braids of shining hair were gathered in a knot behind, and, as here and there a soft curl touched her neck, it gleamed like jet upon a snow wreath.

"Sit down, Alicia, sit down by my side; I have much to tell you, love, and I would that you should hear me now."

And Alicia did as she was bidden, and without foreboding or fear, she lifted up her bright eyes, and looked steadfastly in her father's face. He went on:

"I have much to say of myself that will give you pain—nothing that will make you ashamed of the gray hairs of your father—thank heaven! I have paid to the last pound!"

"What mean you, father? What can distress you so? Tell me, I entreat you!"

He took her hand, he drew her close to him, and ho said:

"Listen."

Whiter and whiter her face grew, and whiter, as that account proceeded, until the whole of his late struggles and their present poverty, was made clear to her mind; a sort of gasping sob escaped her as he ceased to speak, then the tears gushed forth, and she exclaimed, fervently:

"And all are paid—all, father?"

"Yes, my daughter, all—there is none can say I have wronged him of a farthing."

"Oh, father! father! hard though the trial be, there is much consolation in that thought."

The tremulous hand of the old man was laid upon her young, innocent head, and his voice, broken by infirmities, blessed her—fervently and solemnly blessed her.

"You were ever careful of me," she answered, as the tears gushed from her eyes. "Oh! would that I could repay you!"

"It is in your power, my daughter," said her father.

Alicia sprang from her seat, her whole face radiating with sudden pleasure.

"Tell me what I can do, father. Oh! believe me, this hand is not so feeble, nor this frame so weak; I can work—labour for our daily bread—try me, dear father, try me."

"I am sure you would, love!" he said, smiling fondly on her; "but it is not that I ask. Marry Ashley Cleveland, and my gray hairs will go down to the grave in peace."

"Ashley Cleveland!" burst from the quivering lips of the astounded girl. "Marry Ashley Cleveland! I dare not, father—it were mockery!"

And trembling from head to foot, she sank down upon a chair, bewildered and stunned by what she had heard.

"I do not urge it," said her father, with a look of such bitter disappointment, that his child shrank from meeting it. "You have never yet, Alicia, known his equal—surely, if you could love anyone, it must be him."

"Did I understand you clearly, father, as to our present situation? Is there nothing left—no pitance for our support? If it were ever so trifling, so that you would not suffer, I am sure, with my exertions, we might live in comfort. Oh, do not believe me incapable of self-exertion until you try me—give me one trial, father; it is all I ask."

Her father was silent; he knew there was quite sufficient for their maintenance in a humble manner, and he felt assured if Alicia knew the same she would never be wife to Ashley Cleveland. Had she not intimated that her affections were otherwise engaged? And had he a right to go farther, after the distinct assertion of Cleveland. If that were the case, there must be no marriage. These were questions that passed rapidly through his mind. But "grim poverty" stared him in the face. Evil thoughts were in the heart of Morton Hastings, and he yielded to their influence; love of splendour and of station was interwoven in his character, and circumstances were developing how far it would lead him.

"I urge nothing upon you," said her father, calmly but sorrowfully, "it is for you to decide. Cleveland would make your home mine, the same roof would shelter us both—the daughter who has ministered so long to my happiness, would tenderly care for the aged parent who is going down to his long home. Aye! she could lay him in the grave with the consciousness of having cheered the few remaining years of his life, of sparing his worn-out frame the toil and privation it is unfit to struggle with; and for this I could only bless you, my child!"

"And I prize that blessing beyond all other earthly things," exclaimed the distressed girl, "and I will strive to deserve it. Give me till to-morrow to reflect—I must think—I must see clearly what is before me—I will decide by to-morrow."

CHAPTER II.

ONE week from that night, Cleveland called her wife; and as the words were said which made Alicia his for ever, he deemed the wide glorious earth could have added nothing to his perfect happiness. But we must advert, for moment to the first and early love of Alicia Hastings.

It was during the period of her father's difficulties, but before they were generally known, that she first met Walter Singleton, a man whose fascinating exterior, polished manners, and striking figure, had created no slight sensation in the circle of Alicia's acquaintance. His taste was literary, he read much, and talked well; on occasion, affecting enthusiasm he was very far from feeling; but his voice was one of singular sweetness; and perfect art enabled him to modulate its tones, till they sounded like the very outpourings of a deeply-feeling, warm, and fervent heart.

He was unprincipled, though the world termed him "honourable," perchance because he held himself in readiness to shoot his best friend on emergency; with honour in its loftiest sense, he had no communion. Everything he attempted to do, he did well; if he blasted the character of an absent companion, he did it "cleverly"—so cleverly, that the slander was forgiven for the sake of the wit wherewith he had clothed it. His conversational powers had been pronounced unequalled by many of his fair admirers—tact, readiness and skill, united to a most retentive memory, made him at all times delightful.

His income was limited; a wealthy wife was of consequence; his wife must be beautiful, and Alicia Hastings was surely the one, and reputed the other. He bowed at the shrine where many, very many, had knelt before, and he conquered. Alicia loved, and had every reason to believe herself beloved; she had been an object of so much solicitude and affection through life, that she never fancied for moment that Singleton could be otherwise than sincere.

Before Singleton had "committed" himself, and two months before Mr. Hastings closed his affairs, he received a letter from a gentleman who resided in the neighbourhood. Between Henry Moreton and Singleton there existed the strongest mutual dislike; there had been bitter rivalry, and they never spared each other now, although they had drawn the严 of a much-professing friendship over their angry feelings. The letter ran thus:

"Have a care, friend Singleton, what thou doest, for by it known unto thee, that among the glittering gems of character Alicia Hastings undoubtedly possesses, there is no gold! Her father is ruined beyond redemption—is making arrangements to pay his creditors, and it is supposed he will have nothing left but a scanty pittance for his future support. This I have learned from business transactions with him, for it is yet in a great measure secret. And I warn thee in time to beware, but I fear me 'tis too late; if you have a heart, the boy-god has found the way to it now, and it is vexatious the lady should be wanting in the one thing needful. She is not to be lightly won by any suitor. Adieu. MORETON."

"Pshaw!" muttered Singleton, as he crushed the letter in his hand; "not win her! The man writes like a fool. No heart, indeed! wonder where his own is? No gold! then the game's up; 'tis pity, for there is something, after all, in being loved as Alicia is capable of loving, heart or no heart."

Walter Singleton left town that day. Moreton, with the same kind feelings that dictated the first, wrote him the following letter:

"Foiled at last, my patronising friend! Never after this boast your laurels to me. Why, man, the bonnie Hastings has jilted you. No sooner were you fairly off the field, than another sought her; instead of wearing the willow, she wisely concluded to become a wife. Her marriage took place this morning, and a most brilliant one it is for Miss Hastings; she, at least, has reason to congratulate herself that you so signally failed in making a serious impression on her heart, for Ashley Cleveland, as a catch, must be decidedly preferred to your magnificient self. As it is your first failure, I suppose you bear it with considerable fortitude. Yours, MORETON."

It is almost impossible for the sober-minded to realise fully the excessive indignation this letter inspired in the mind of Singleton; his morbid self-love literally writhed under every insinuation, made, too, by one whom he had never spared on a similar occasion.

But turn we from him to the young bride and her husband. Two months have gone since the bridal,

and the flowers and the sunshine of early summer were around their path. Cleveland had taken his wife and her father to his country seat, which was finely situated. A vast extent of forest stretched far beyond it. Alicia loved to wander in the grand old woods, and to listen to the roar of the wind as it stirred the mighty branches of the majestic oak, and ever she was alone.

Assured that while she did not love him, she loved no other, Cleveland hoped daily to see some return of the affection he lavished upon her so freely—but in vain. It pained him; he began to fear he had acted foolishly and rashly in marrying before he was certain of her love.

"She does not love me—she never will!" he thought, almost despairingly, and a shade of settled sorrow gathered over his handsome face, that contrasted sadly and strangely with the buoyant and happy expression it had worn a short time before. One day he entered the room where she and her father were sitting.

"Alicia, love, put on your hat, and come to walk with me. The air is balmy and delightful, the very birds are singing from their leafy homes the notes of welcome to my lady-bird," and he moved the book she was reading gently from her hand, and smiled upon her with a look full of warm interest and affection.

"I am very dull to-day," said Alicia, languidly. "I fear you will find me a stupid companion; but if you desire it I will accompany you certainly."

"Do not put any force upon your inclinations," said Cleveland, in a tone of slight pique, "as I have been too long accustomed to solitary walks to object to them."

"Then, if it is really of no consequence, I will remain at home," said Alicia, quietly resuming her book.

Cleveland left the room without reply.

Mr. Hastings had been a silent but not unobservant spectator of what had passed.

"My dear child, you should have gone," he said, in a low tone.

"Should I?" she answered, staring and colouring deeply. "I—I really did not think it was of consequence."

"You know, Alicia, how well he loves you?" Alicia burst into tears. Her father was startled. "Is it not so, love?" he said, inquiringly.

"It is—it is! I see—I feel it all—but oh! father, I must have time, I cannot uproot with a single effort my first early feelings. I try hard, father! In the silent night, when none but God can hear, I pray for a strength I feel I have not. Pity me, and pray for me, father!" She rose up, pale and trembling, and left the room.

Not long after this Cleveland and his wife were together, the former was running over the names of a number of visitors expected the next week, Alicia listening and assenting to his remarks.

"It is for your sake, my dear Alicia, I wish them all to come. I remember how much you seemed to enjoy society, and I hope it will be the same now as ever—you know I have a hope that some portion of your former animation will come back again, when you are thrown among your old friends?"

Alicia looked up with an uneasy expression of countenance, but when she met the open and tender glance bent on her, she felt reassured and answered, timidly:

"I trust it will be as you wish, Mr. Cleveland."

He took up an unopened letter on the table, and broke the seal, that, if possible, his thoughts might be diverted into another channel; after reading it for a few moments he exclaimed:

"I am really glad he is coming—few men are so delightful in conversation as Walter Singleton!"

"As who?" exclaimed Alicia, half starting from her chair, and as instantly re-seating herself, her face perfectly colourless and her lip quivering.

"Walter Singleton," said her husband, in a very low tone, for a fearful suspicion had entered his heart, and almost took away the power of utterance.

"I am not well—let me go to my own room," said Alicia, trembling violently, and utterly unable to control her agitation.

She made an effort to rise—he assisted her—she looked up, and when she met his glance, she clasped her hands together, and exclaimed:

"Bear with me, my husband! bear with me a little longer, and I will yet deserve the love that has been wasted on your miserable wife!"

"I do not ask you the meaning of this, Alicia; it is stamped upon my heart in characters that can never be effaced. And was it for gauds such as these," he said, pointing to the jewels that adorned her person, "you dared to perjure yourself? See! they clasp your arm and glitter in your hair, and heaven help you! for the heart that beats beneath them is breaking!"

"Not for these! Oh no—no—not for these. To

save my old father from beggary—from poverty—worse than death to him," and she wept bitterly.

"Peace!" said Cleveland, with such sternness of manner, that startled and confounded, Alicia shrank before him. "Why will yo add falsehood to the rest? Go to your own room, and calm yourself if it be in your power; 'the outward seeming' you have kept up so long, had better be sustained to the last."

She left the room without a word.

Fierce and ungovernable was the wrath that shook the frame of Cleveland. He believed she had spoken falsely, and she was lowered in his esteem; scorn—the bitterest regret for his own rashness—indignation at the deceit of Mr. Hastings, swept by turns over his proud, imperious spirit. Oh! that he could break the bonds that bound them so fearfully together, and free them both from their horrible situation, were thoughts that passed continually through his troubled mind.

The door opened, and Mr. Hastings entered. Cleveland turned suddenly, his face pale, and terrible from the strength of contending passions.

"Ha!" he said, "you have come to see your work! Did I not warn you, old man, that Alicia must not be my wife, if she loved another? Your gray hairs should have been pledged for your honour—you have basely deceived me, and brought upon your good name shame and disgrace."

Hastings could not reply; it was as if a thunderbolt had been hurled to crush him; he supported his hands upon his cane, and bowed down his head upon them; he was indeed utterly humbled. And this was Morton Hastings! so high in the world's esteem—of character so unimpeachable!

"I can well believe, Mr. Hastings, there are extenuating circumstances in your conduct. Perhaps you thought you were doing what was best for your daughter and myself, but look at the result! She loves another, even she, my wedded wife! And that other will be here—will see her daily—hourly—and I—what can I do? It is madness to think of it!"

"Trust to my daughter's principles," said the old man, firmly though feebly; "I know her well, and the trust will not be in vain."

"Ay," said Cleveland, in bitter irony, "but if they are not different from her father's I had best shoot myself."

"They are different," replied Mr. Hastings, looking up, "thanks be to a merciful God for that!"—and the tears streamed from his dim eyes, as the fervent thanksgiving passed his lips.

"I have spoken harshly, sir," said Cleveland, much moved; "we are at all times liable to error, let us forget the past." He held out his hand.

As Mr. Cleveland grasped it, he said:

"If I alone was the sufferer, I might forget."

They parted with heavy hearts, but without anger. Turn we now to Alicia.

The path of duty is a straight one, and through all untoward circumstances to walk therein is safest and best: there may be thorns that torture and perplex, but there are roses by the wayside, whose pleasant fragrance cheer the traveller to the latest hour of his existence. Sustained and supported by conscientious rectitude, Alicia hoped to meet Singleton with composure, so that even her husband should be satisfied. She was not angry that Cleveland had spoken harshly to her; she attached no meaning to his words, believing him almost bewildered with grief at the time.

The morning came when their visitors were expected; they were a large party, including Singleton and his comrade friend, Henry Moreton. When they arrived, much noisy delight at meeting with Alicia was manifested by her younger friends, and Cleveland hoped it might cover any confusion she exhibited on receiving Singleton. But such was not the purpose of the letter; he delayed for several moments to come forward, pretending to be engaged at the door; he was anxious about his reception: certainly, nothing could have gratified him more than marks of agitation or interest. Alicia saw him approach, and as she felt without seeing, her husband was observing her, she took a step out of the circle that surrounded her, and said, quite calmly:

"It is an age since we have met, Mr. Singleton—I hope I have the pleasure of seeing you quite well?"

Singleton bowed low, and answered by some passing compliment, but on the whole felt uncomfortable, for as he looked forward, he encountered the keen little eyes of Moreton regarding him with an expression of malicious pleasure that made him feel strongly desirous of throttling him. He felt certain Moreton had detected his disappointment, and the thought pierced him like a barbed arrow through the many windings of his inordinate self-love.

Some two weeks after their arrival, Moreton and Singleton had sauntered to a distance from the house; the day was pleasant, they walked far, and their conversation was of Alicia.

"I tell you what, Singleton," said the former, abruptly, "you are playing a losing game. She is of a higher principle than you believe it possible for a woman to be—of firmer mind, though her heart be weak, than it has been your lot to encounter."

"Spare your wit till you can flavour it with truth," was the sneering answer; "there was a time when her eyes and her actions told me plainly that she loved me; it will go hard but that I'll wring the same acknowledgment from her tongue."

"Yet I dare be sworn, you do in no degree return that love," said Moreton.

"I am not fond of defeat," said Singleton, drily; "and in this case, of all others, am not disposed to submit to it."

"Singleton, you are a fiend."

"Quite likely, my immaculate friend; and what may you see proper to style yourself?"

"Neither so hardened or so desperate a—"

"Villain!" said Singleton, coolly lifting up the pane; "out with it, Harry, what does a word signify?"

"I admit it is no easy task to believe in what is right, if I put faith in you—but I may live to see you foiled. Notwithstanding bad associations, I have yet some reverence for that sex, of which my mother is one. As to Alicia, I have observed her conduct carefully; as quietly and unobtrusively as it is in her power, she avoids your attentions. She has also to guard against the feelings of her own heart: I do believe the past and the present hold doubtful conflict in her mind, and tenderness on the part of Cleveland, would establish his hold over it for ever."

"We shall see," said Singleton, with a sneer that destroyed all the beauty of his countenance, "we shall see! I will stake my reputation on success."

When they entered the drawing-room, they found a number of ladies already around Alicia, eagerly discussing a projected party.

"Where are they going?" said Singleton, in a low tone, to a lady near him.

"A ride of a few miles—won't you join us?" was the reply.

Singleton stepped up to the circle, and said:

"Shall I have the pleasure of driving you, Mrs. Cleveland?"

Alicia was embarrassed, she feared by any act of her own to attract the attention of others to Singleton and herself; she wished to place him precisely on the same footing as the other gentlemen; she hesitated, and Singleton said, in a tone of inquiring surprise:

"I really thought the party determined on—I was mistaken?"

"No, no, Mrs. Cleveland," cried several voices.

Mr. Cleveland was not present, but he rode to the house on horseback, at the moment of the starting, and Alicia noted the grave and displeased expression of his countenance as he regarded them; he did not approach them, but immediately entered the house.

Of conversational powers almost unequalled and most fascinating, and possessing, in addition, a voice of wonderful sweetness, Singleton exerted all, in the full conviction that his efforts would be attended with complete success.

In agony Alicia struggled, and her prayer ascended to One who never yet refused to aid the right—the strife passed by, and she grew calm. She listened, but the words were as though she heard them not; she never replied, save when directly questioned, and except that her face was very pale, there was no other outward token of her mental anguish. Singleton was vexed—provoked—the folds of her veil were heavy, and he could not gather from her countenance what impression he had made; her silence was therefore doubly annoying to him. When they reached home, as he handed her from the carriage, he said:

"I trust your ride has been pleasant enough to tempt you soon again?"

"No," she said, coldly, "I at all times prefer walking."

The manner was decisive. And something more than the shadow of a doubt fell upon his presumptuous hopes.

As Alicia entered the hall door, she saw her husband coming out of the parlour, she had thrown her veil back, and he instantly noticed her extreme pallor, and noticed it with the strongest feelings of indignation. Oh, how Alicia longed for his sympathy at that moment—that he would take her to his heart, and bless her for her faith to him—and she felt as though, after much suffering and trouble, she could be happy there for ever! She went up to him, and laid her trembling hand upon his arm.

"Do come with me to my own room, she said, tremulously; "we have scarcely seen each other since our guests arrived."

He shook off her hand, almost rudely. "Excuse me," he said, bitterly, "I have other matters in hand."

Cleveland was far too fiery and impatient to judge

with anything like fairness of the condition of his wife; besides, he doubted her sincerity, but that of course grew out of the fact that she had married him loving another; her excuse that she had done so to save her father from beggary had no weight with him, knowing as he did that poverty was not the alternative. The bitterest tears she had ever shed, streamed down Alicia's face as she turned from her husband to seek the solitude of her own room. The first thought of her own heart (so prone to rebel) was: "Is this my reward, when I have struggled so faithfully! Surely—surely—it is very hard!" and she sobbed aloud, for her strength was nearly gone.

"Oh!" she murmured, "if there had been the barest pittance for my poor old father, this misery might have been spared—oh, father! father, it costs me very dear!"

"Alicia, my daughter, this is dreadful!"

Alicia sprang to her feet, and turning, beheld her father standing before her, looking more like one of the dead than a human being.

"You here, my own dear father! I did not see you!"

"I know it. I came in before you, and I heard all; now, even now is the hour of retribution!—my poor child!"

He took her in his arms, and his tears fell upon her beautiful forehead; he smoothed back the shining hair and tenderly he kissed her.

"My poor child!—and is it even so? young in years, and yet so full of sorrow—sorrow that I have brought you—I that dishonoured my gray hairs to make you what you are. Listen, Alicia."

And he told her all. How many thoughts, conflicting and rapid, chased each other through the mind of his daughter as the tale went on. That her husband, who had been willing to run the risk of her indifference if her heart was free, had forbid their union should it be otherwise; and knowing the support left her father from the wreck of his fortune, he must have supposed it was his wealth she coveted. A groan of anguish escaped her, as she exclaimed:

"He was bitterly wronged, my father!"

"He was—he was, indeed! but oh, my dear! if you could love him yet, it would repay him for all the sorrow of the past; will it not be so, Alicia?"

"I honour him from my inmost heart," she answered, fervently. "I do more, I esteem and glory in him; oh, he is all that is noble and excellent! but his heart is turned from me, father; there is no look, nor tone, as in our early marriage days—he loves me no longer!"

"Do not fear, Alicia—faithfully do your duty at all hazards—seek a full explanation with your husband, and the sure result will be—happiness. I greatly erred, but have greatly repented—will you forgive the past, Alicia?"

"I have nothing to forgive, dear father."

Mr. Hastings was silent for many moments, then said:

"My days were many, Alicia, and had been full of honour, when I turned from the straight path, and forgot the truth. Since then there has been weight upon my mind, heavy, and hard to bear, the weight of guilt! It is as if the rest of my existence were blotted out, and the last few months were marked in vivid characters of woe and distress. See what it is to depart from duty; my whole frame is feeble and bowed to the earth—this poor old body is going down to its long home—I feel that my days are shortened by the constant and wearing anxiety I have endured for the sake of your happiness; there is no joy, nor hope, nor trust beyond the pale of duty."

The solemn tones of her father's voice rung in her ear long after he ceased to speak. He smiled fondly as he met the gaze of the bright, tender eyes uplifted in anxious affection.

"Do not fear," he said. "The tree will fall when its sap has departed; and blessed to the old, the weary, and the worn is the exchange!"

The evening of that day was warm, and the guests had scattered far and wide to enjoy the cool night breeze; some few lingered in the drawing-room, Alicia among the number; Singleton also was present. The windows were thrown wide open, reaching to the floor, and looking out on a balcony that ran the whole length of the house; a portion of it had been partitioned off with lattice-work, and there it was the custom of Cleveland to read, when the day was unpleasantly warm.

As soon as tea was over, book in hand, he had taken his accustomed place. His mind was disturbed by gloomy and desponding thoughts. He lingered long until the last ray of daylight had passed, and night began slowly to gather around him. But not a night of darkness; the moon rode high and glorious in the heavens, clothed in her robe of silver, and casting the light of her wonderful beauty upon the dim and far away earth. Cleveland heard a step; he knew it well—Alicia's. She seated herself near him, nothing but the thin lattice work between them;

he even heard the low, tremulous sigh that escaped her lips.

Yet not for worlds would he have met her then—at the very moment when he believed her failing in her duty to him. He remained silent, and a moment after she was joined by Singleton. Cleveland could not leave without passing before them—he chose to remain; and suspicion, black as despair, gathered her "murky folds" around his heart.

"You are selfish, Mrs. Cleveland, in coming out to enjoy such a scene alone," said Singleton.

"Perhaps my sense of enjoyment consists in being alone," replied Alicia, with some emphasis on the latter word, and in a voice of extreme coldness.

"And yet I think," said Singleton, "your taste was not always thus—I remember me of a time not long since, when you thought sympathy essential to the enjoyment of such a scene."

"Our views alter, sir," said Alicia, rising to go in mine have, unquestionably."

"Mine have not!" said Singleton, with a sudden eagerness, "the love I once felt for you, strong and all-powerful, is the same as ever."

"Hold, sir!" cried Alicia, her eyes flashing and her form erect, "such language is not for my ears!—disgraceful in you to utter, dishonouring to the husband that is so immeasurably your superior!"

"Scoundrel!" said a deep voice that made the heart of Singleton leap wildly in his bosom, while a hand of giant strength grasped him by the collar, and shook him till the breath nearly left his body; "base! treacherous villain! how dare you, like a thief in the night, steal into another man's fold?" and with all the power that overwhelming passion gives, he hurled him against the slender railing that encircled the balcony—it shivered into a hundred pieces, but Singleton caught by a pillar, and springing to his feet, drew from his bosom a weapon that glittered in the moonlight; he raised it, and a fearful imprecation passed his lips—with a frantic cry of terror, Alicia rushed forward—"My husband! save him!"

"Do not fear," said Cleveland, "the scoundrel dreads the gallows!"

At the moment of Alicia's shriek, Singleton saw lights moving, and forms flitting by the windows of the drawing-room; fear of detection mastered every other feeling, and with a bound he was out of sight. To the astonished looks of the crowd that gathered around them, Cleveland only answered by saying Mrs. Cleveland had been taken suddenly ill; of that there was all—sufficient evidence, for she lay quite senseless in her husband's arms. They assisted in removing her to her chamber; but it was long before their efforts to recover her were attended with success; when at last she came slowly to herself, and recollection returned, she looked round with a wild, bewildered look, and a strong shudder passed visibly over her frame, as she spoke very feebly:

"I would gladly be alone, Mr. Cleveland."

Everyone left the room but her husband, compelled to bear as best they might the troubled feelings of curiosity, not very likely from present appearances to be gratified.

"Alicia, an hour since you called me your husband," said Cleveland, lifting her aching head upon his arm—"cannot you do so always?"

"Always! to the latest hour of my life—if you will allow it!" she exclaimed, with a passionate burst of tears.

"Allow it!—my wife! mine—and mine only, for ever!"

M. H. P.

It is recorded of a Rouman Catholic lady, one of the Silvertops, of Northumberland, in the last century, that she married thrice, her first husband being a Quaker, her second a Church of England man, and her third a Roman Catholic; and what is more curious still, on each occasion she married a man twice her own age—at sixteen, a man of thirty-two; at thirty, a man of sixty; and at forty-two, a man of eighty-four.

THE QUEEN AND SIR EDWIN LANDSEER ON CROPPING TERRIERS' EARS.—The practice of cropping the ears of terriers in order to improve their appearance was the subject of a prosecution recently by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Evidence was adduced to show that the operation was an act of cruelty, and must necessarily cause extreme pain. The attorney for the defence referred to a painting of Sir Edwin Landseer's, in which her Majesty's dogs were represented with cropped ears, but Sir Edwin, who was present, stated that the Queen protested against the practice, and that while in his picture he merely represented a prevalent custom, personally he was strongly opposed to it. The magistrate held the practice to constitute cruelty within the meaning of the Act, and inflicted a small fine in each case.

NEXT OF KIN OF SOLDIERS.—For the information of the next of kin of soldiers who have died int-

tate, leaving sums of money or other effects, the authorities of the War Office have latterly issued, periodically, a list of the names of deceased soldiers, with the sums of money they have left set opposite each name. Such lists have hitherto appeared; but we observe by an advertisement in the *Times*, that the usual list required to be published by the Regimental Debts Act is omitted; claimants being referred to the *London Gazette* and the *Army List*, or "to the quarters of the several staff officers for the recruiting and pension service throughout the United Kingdom," for the names of soldiers who have died intestate. We cannot recognise the efficacy or sufficiency of this mode of advising relatives of "soldiers' balances unclaimed"; and we doubt even the legality of omitting to advertise the lists in the public journals. Whether, however, the lists are consulted or not in the *Gazette*, or at recruiting quarters, by next of kin, claimants, being aware of the death of a relative in the army, should send all the particulars concerning the deceased soldier to the War Office by letter; being particular to give the date and place of the soldier's birth and enlistment, and death, and the name of his regiment. Applications are required to be addressed by letter, "To the Under Secretary of State, War Office, London, S.W.," marked outside "Soldiers' effects."

THE PROPHECY.

BY THE

Author of "Oliver Darvel," "Michel-dever," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXXV.

In a few moments Mrs. Brent was admitted into the darkened room in which Ashford sat; for twilight was approaching, and the gas had not yet been lighted. With his most affable manner he came forward to receive her. He had a deep game to play, and he played it well. He drew from Mrs. Brent all the particulars of the case, and agreed to keep still while Mrs. Linwood lived, if she did not live more than a year, and then asked Violet's real name. Mrs. Brent replied:

"Her name is Russell. Her mother was the younger daughter of Mr. Wentworth; she ran away with a clerk in his employment, who was distantly connected with her. Young Russell's mother had charge of the old gentleman's orphan daughters, and I am sure she connived at the elopement. Her expectations were all disappointed though, for Mr. Wentworth never forgave Mrs. Russell till it was too late to do any good. She died, poor thing, and then he made that will which has caused so much sin and unhappiness."

"Can this be possible?" asked Ashford, and his hard voice had in it a tone of genuine interest. "I knew Edward Russell, and also the mother of this young lady. At one time I gave French and German lessons to both her and her sister. I had no idea that Mrs. Linwood was so old an acquaintance of mine. She will remember me, I have no doubt."

"Oh, sir, I am very glad to hear this, for it gives me additional security that you will guard the secret my poor mistress is so anxious to keep concealed. I will tell her what you have said, and I am sure she will remember you. I must go now, but to-morrow you shall hear from us, and a cheque will be sent for the sum you say you so greatly need."

Ashford was in great glee at the successful termination of their interview. He was to be well paid for a few months' silence, and as soon as the money was secured, he intended to see how much he could wring out of the other party for betraying all he knew to him. He remembered young Russell well, as the man who had rivalled with him the gay girl who had first touched his heart, and he hated him now as bitterly for his success in winning Alice Wentworth as if he had ever hoped to be successful with her himself.

He went over all that past, and laughed harshly as he thought that, after all, the fate of the heiress of those haughty people lay in his own hand.

In the meantime, Mrs. Brent reached home, and found Mrs. Linwood in a state of great excitement, in anticipation of the news she might bring. She had worked herself almost into a hysterical condition by imagining what the result would be to herself, if Mrs. Brent failed in her embassy.

When Judith came in, she raised her pale face from the sofa pillow, and eagerly asked:

"Have you been successful? Tell me in a word."

"Yes; I have, ma'am."

Mrs. Linwood sank back with a sigh.

"Come here and sit beside me, Judith," she feverishly said. "I am dying to hear what you have to tell me. Louis has been here since you went away; and he was so kind—so—so tender to me, that I was struck with new dread that this threatened danger could not be averted."

"Don't be afraid of that," replied the faithful attendant, in the tone of one who soothes an unreasonable and fractious child. "Mr. Ashford turns out to be an old acquaintance of yours, and I believe he will keep the promise he made to accept five hundred pounds, and say nothing for a year."

"Oh, the money is a trifling consideration; I would gladly give that, and more, if he asked it; but how is it that he claims acquaintance with me? I do not remember the name."

"He says he was once a teacher of languages to you and Miss Alice, and that he knew Mr. Russell very well. If you go back to those days, perhaps you may be able to recall him to memory."

Mrs. Linwood uttered a faint cry.

"That man! Oh, I remember him now; and he has little cause for forbearance towards me. Though he was so many years older than Alice—for he must then have been thirty—he fell desperately in love with her. I saw, and resented his infatuation, and I made such a complaint to my father that Ashford was dismissed, and ordered never to speak to either my sister or myself again. Oh, Judith, if I am in the power of that man, he will crush me. I feel it—I know it."

"If you think that, it will be best to tell Mr. Linwood everything yourself before he has the chance to betray you. He will wait for the money; but instead of sending it, my advice is, to take your husband into your confidence, and prove to him that it will be best to let Miss Violet come home to you."

Mrs. Linwood covered her face with her hands, and remained silent some moments. She at length looked up, and in an agitated tone, said:

"I cannot—I cannot—I should die under such an ordeal as that; I must trust to this man's cupidity to keep him true to his word."

"He seemed too much interested in Miss Violet, to give her up to your husband."

"Did he? I hope that will withhold him, though I am almost sure that Louis would not attempt anything against my niece. Bring me my portfolio. I will write a cheque for him at once, and you may enclose it in a few lines promising him the same sum at my decease, if he will be faithful to me."

Mrs. Brent brought the portfolio, and placed pen and ink on a table near her mistress. Mrs. Linwood in a clear, firm hand wrote a cheque for the five hundred pounds to be paid to Hiram Ashford at sight, and signed it with her full name. Then she said wearily:

"Take it away, Judith; the sight of my own name in connection with that of this Ashford, quite unnerves me. I will send him the money, and if he betrays me, then—I can but die."

"Mrs. Linwood, I ask you if it will not be better for you to brave the fury of your husband by telling him the truth, than to place yourself in the power of a man you mistrust so deeply? If he should prove treacherous, think how much worse your position would be, than if you confess yourself that you took measures to prevent a hideous wrong from being done to your niece."

Mrs. Linwood listened to this remonstrance with dilating eyes and quivering lips. She put out her hand and drew the cheque towards her, as she said:

"I—I—I believe that you are right, Judith; the course you point out is the just one, and I—I will try."

She paused, shivered violently, and thrusting back the paper, cried out:

"Why do you torture me so? I have not strength to bear it. Take this away, send it to its destination, and say nothing more to me on this subject. If I were strong and well, it would be my duty to tell Louis what I did so long ago; but I shall not long be here, and it is cruel in you to ask me to risk the most precious thing I possess—the little love he yet feels for me."

With a sigh, Mrs. Brent gravely said:

"I will do as you wish. I have always tried to serve you to the best of my ability, and although my judgment tells me that you are taking the wrong course, I shall implicitly obey you. I will write what you told me to Mr. Ashford, and perhaps the promise of an additional reward at some future day, may keep him true to his pledge."

"What does it matter? When that last slumber seals my eyelids, you may tell everything."

"What is that, Ellinor? Are you really talking about dying, and giving your last injunctions to Mrs. Brent?" said a cheerful voice from the door which had opened without being perceived by the two women. "If you indulge in such sombre fancies, I do not wonder that your health does not improve."

Linwood came across the floor as he spoke, and threw himself upon a chair near his wife, and Judith retreated through the door leading into her own room.

A bright flash of colour came into Mrs. Linwood's faded cheeks, and a soft light into her eyes, as she eagerly put forth her hand to welcome him, and said:

"How good it is of you, Louis, to give up the opera, and come to pass the evening with me."

"The prima donna is ill, and cannot appear to-night," he carelessly replied; "the new opera is deferred of course, and I did not care to see 'Robert le Diable' again. Fine as some of the music is, I am heartily tired of it. I remembered how ill you looked when I came in late in the afternoon, and I came back to sit with you, Nell."

"Ah, Louis, if you would only go home! We could live there as luxuriously as here; and I think my health would improve if I could breathe my native air again."

Linwood sat silent several moments, and then abruptly said:

"Perhaps it may be possible to return. I have had a strange presentiment lately that something will turn up to render it expedient to do so. We shared alike in the obloquy that fell on us after the mysterious disappearance of that child, though it was hardly fair that you should have been blamed for what I arranged and carried out myself. I sometimes think that you are fretting yourself into your grave because it is now impossible to right that wrong, Ellinor."

His wife listened with gasping breath and fluttering heart, and in a low, suffocated tone, she asked:

"Why impossible, Louis? Ah! if we could—if we could reclaim her, I think I should at least die happier, knowing that the child of poor Alice was restored to her rights."

Her husband regarded her with an expression of angry astonishment, as he brusquely said:

"That is a sensible question to ask me, as if you could not answer it yourself. We should cut a pretty figure with the lost heiress coming to accuse us of spiriting her away. If the facts were even hinted at, we should be covered with infamy."

His wife shivered, and moaned:

"But if others should find out who and what she is, Louis, would it not be better for us to forestall them, and offer tardy justice on our side?" she eagerly said.

"It is too late for that," he decisively replied. "I do not apprehend discovery except through Hug-gins."

"I do not think you have anything to dread from that source," said Mrs. Linwood, in a low voice; and she made a desperate effort to nerve herself to make the avowal. Mrs. Brent had so earnestly advised:

Her nervous system was so shattered that she was incapable of controlling herself, and as she forced her lips apart to speak the words, a hysterical cry was all the sound that issued from them, and she fell back, white and nearly lifeless.

Linwood hastily summoned Mrs. Brent to her assistance, and in a few moments he left the room himself, muttering something about the discomfort of having an invalid wife.

He was gone, and the opportunity was lost.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

On the following afternoon, the cheque for five hundred pounds reached Ashford, and he read the few lines in which it was enclosed with an expression of contemptuous surprise.

"Oh ho! my lady, it is my turn now," he muttered, "and I shall make the most of it, regardless of what you may suffer. In those other days it was you who played the part of spy and informer, and induced the old man to turn me out of his house almost with contempt; I will pay you back with interest now. You are in my power, and I care not what may be the result of my revelations."

Barking hours were over for that day, so he sat down to write an anonymous letter to Louis Linwood, which he felt very sure would lead to an interview between them. He rapidly wrote the following lines:

"A man who is fully aware of all the circumstances attending the removal of Violet Russell from the protection of her affectionate uncle requests a private meeting with Mr. Linwood."

"The little girl was never taken away as was arranged, and the writer of this knows where she is to be found. In fact she was placed under his care and that of his wife; at the death of the latter, she was transferred to others, but she has always been well cared for, and she has received an excellent education. She is quite worthy of the great fortune to which she was born, and unless Mr. Linwood is very liberal in his offers, her claims will be brought forward by other friends as well as by the writer of these lines. But he alone can furnish the proofs necessary to reinstate Miss Russell in her rights, and they will be produced or withheld, as Mr. L. may decide."

"If Mr. L. will call at the enclosed address and inquire for Mr. Ashford to-morrow evening at eight

o'clock, some satisfactory arrangement can possibly be entered into between them."

"That will bring him fast enough, I fancy," chuckled Ashford, as he sealed and directed hismissive. He went out and posted it himself, returning to dinner in excellent spirits.

The next evening he prepared himself for the interview with Linwood.

Fantasi and Mrs. Peck had an engagement for that evening, which Ashford declined accepting.

Wine and cigars had been placed on a table near one of the windows, and he threw himself into a lounging chair in such a position that he could command a view of the street below. Twilight was gathering, but he could still recognize any familiar figure that appeared on the pavement, when a tall, aristocratic looking man alighted from a cab at the corner, and dismissed it.

He moved slowly forward, carefully scanning the numbers of the houses on the opposite side, and presently crossed the street at a rapid pace, and rang at the door of Ashford's lodgings.

He heard the inquiry made for himself, and advanced to the door in readiness to greet the guest he felt so sure would come.

Linwood was very pale, and he measured his companion with a questioning, anxious glance, which proved how important to him was the interview he had sought.

Ashford bowed courteously, and said:

"Pray be seated, sir."

"I came hither at your summons, sir, to hear what you have to say on the subject you broached in your letter. The loss of that child has been a great affliction both to my wife and myself, and if she is to be found, we wish earnestly to know where she is, and by whom she has been secreted. A large reward was offered for her recovery at the time she was stolen. Did you not see the advertisement in all the leading Papers? Why have you withheld this information so long?"

Ashford looked him calmly in the face while he uttered these words in a nervous and hesitating tone. With a hard laugh, he asked:

"Did you come here with the hope that you could impose such a sham as that upon me, Mr. Linwood? Did I not tell you that I know all the particulars of that child's abduction? If we are to do business together at all, sir, it must be done fairly."

"I am sure I wish with all my heart that I had never been tempted to do that which brings me in familiar contact with such a man as you are. You wish to be bribed high, I suppose, but you must first convince me that you are in possession of the proofs you referred to, and prove to me that you alone can produce them."

"That is easily done. Sixteen years ago Violet Russell was brought to the secluded valley in which I then lived. Money came with her, and more was promised for her maintenance, which was regularly paid. At the death of my wife, she was given up to a lady in the neighbourhood, who had taken a fancy to her. I made many efforts to discover something concerning her family, but until a few days ago I was so far baffled that I gained no clue to what I sought. I accidentally met you in the park, and recognised you through the resemblance you bear to a person that Violet persisted in calling her uncle whenever she saw him. The man to whom I accidentally applied for information not only told me your name, but spoke of the opportune disappearance of a little girl who was the heiress of the greater part of the estate your wife now holds. I thus hold all the threads of your story, and if you wish to know the full extent of my information, and how it was obtained, you must, as I said in my letter, be liberal in your offers."

"What are your terms for unveiling to me the means by which the child was taken from the man to whom she was confided and transferred to you?"

"A thousand guineas for that, and as much more a year as long as you retain possession of Violet Russell's estate."

"But she is not entitled to it yet. When she is of age she takes half the estate, the balance at my wife's decease. She lacks nearly four years yet of being twenty-one. I will pay you your first demand to find out what I wish to know about the treachery of which I have, in my turn, been the victim."

"Have you no suspicion of the means used to prevent the child from being taken away?"

"If I have, it is no concern of yours, Mr. Ashford, I am ready to pay you for such information as you can give me, and I shall be glad if you will lose no time in making such statements."

"If I betray others I must be paid beforehand," said Ashford, sullenly. "I could get as much, or more, for keeping the secret than I have demanded of you."

"I have my own opinion as to that; but as I have no wish to quarrel with you, I had rather not express

it. I have had some experience of men of your stamp before to-day. I supposed that money must be forthcoming before you would speak, so I came prepared. I have over a thousand pounds in my pocket-book, which you can see me count over. When the revelation is made, it shall be yours."

Ashford longingly regarded the money, and after a pause abruptly said:

"Huggins sold you to your wife. She it was who induced him to take a bribe from herself to play into her hands, and allow you to believe that Violet was taken away with his family, while she was in reality under the care of a woman who is still with Mrs. Linwood. Judith Brent brought her to the Vale, but such precautions were taken as prevented me from making any discovery as to the child's family. Had I been able to do so, Mr. Linwood, you would have heard from me many a year ago."

The face of Linwood underwent many changes as he listened. He controlled his voice perfectly as he said:

"Give me minute details, if you please. I wish to learn exactly how the deception was accomplished."

Ashford repeated what had been told him by Mrs. Brent only two days before, little dreaming that she was placing in his hands a power he would so speedily abuse. It was made clear to Linwood that he had paid Huggins a large sum for a service that had never been performed; and, bad man as he was, he could not help feeling more respect for his wife than he had given her while he believed she acquiesced in the disposal made of her niece, and was willing to allow the child to be defrauded of her inheritance.

When Ashford's recital was finished, he sat a few moments absorbed in thought, and then pushing the notes to him, curiously said:

"There is your reward; what you have told me is worth the sum, and I do not grudge it."

He arose, and looked around for his hat and gloves. After clutching the money in his avaricious grasp, Ashford noticed this movement, and said, in some surprise:

"You are not going before we have settled the other affairs? Of course you don't wish the girl to know who and what she is, and I have already told you that I will keep dark for—a handsome consideration."

"And sell myself, body and soul, to such a leech as you are!" cried the other, for the first time losing control of himself. "After consulting with my wife, if I find it necessary to bribe you to keep this secret, I will accept the terms you offered."

The face of the listener grew dark with rage and disappointment, but he made an effort to command himself, and coolly said:

"I warn you that money, and a good deal of it too, will alone prevent me from publishing the whole story. What would be your position then, I wonder?"

"That is no concern of yours, Mr. Ashford; but I would not advise you to enter the lists against me. I would crush you without remorse, if you dared to raise your voice against me; and in a contest like this, no one knows the power of money better than yourself. And you are known to be as unscrupulous in your dealings, that many would believe you quite capable of trumping up the whole story for the purpose of extorting money."

"I think I can return the compliment, Mr. Linwood," was the sardonic reply.

"But this is idle—I do not choose to recriminate with you, Mr. Ashford, nor do I wish to leave myself at the mercy of such a man as you are. When I have settled what is to be done with reference to Violet, I will, to insure your discretion, pay you the additional thousand guineas you ask; and if I decide to ignore her existence altogether, the annuity shall also be paid. But I must have time to consider."

Linwood put on his hat, bowed haughtily, when Ashford, with rather a crestfallen air, asked:

"When and how am I to have your decision, sir? I am as sure of that annuity as if it was already in my possession."

"A week from to-day you shall hear from me."

In another moment he was gone, and Ashford stood bewildered, and indignant at the result of the interview. He knew that Linwood had spoken the truth. A man of his character could not attack with impunity one so far above him in the social scale as his adversary. He would be crushed in the unequal contest.

He consoled himself by handling the notes which had been given him as the price of his latest treachery, and in assuring himself that Linwood would never surrender the estate he had done so much to secure. He laughed harshly as he muttered:

"When the other thousand is safely paid over I will see if Violet won't double my annuity if I show her how to win back her own. I will pay him out for his insolence yet; the unprincipled scoundrel shall

find that he met with more than his match when he came in contact with Hiram Ashford."

In the meantime Linwood had jumped into a cab, and given the driver an extra fare to take him to his own lodgings as rapidly as possible. He wished to see his wife before she retired for the night, and as it was by this time nearly ten o'clock, he was afraid she might have done so before he could reach his destination.

As he feared, she had retired to her chamber; but he heard voices in the next room, and he tapped lightly upon the door and asked if he could come in.

Mrs. Brent, looking very anxious, answered the summons, and gravely said:

"Mrs. Linwood is just recovering from a violent nervous attack, which at one time I feared would prove fatal. If you come in she would be sure to rouse up, and any farther excitement would be dangerous for her."

"Has there been any unusual cause for excitement?" he asked, in a guarded tone. "She seemed in better spirits than common when I saw her to-day."

The woman's face changed, and she said almost in a whisper, and with evident reluctance:

"She had a letter, and something in it gave her a bad turn. She has been very ill ever since she opened it."

"Who is with your mistress?" he asked.

"One of the women belonging to the house. She is a good nurse."

"Then do you come out, and leave her a little while to watch. Since I cannot see your mistress, I must learn from you what you doubtless know as much of as she does."

Mrs. Brent led the way into the luxuriously furnished parlour, in which a single gas light was dimly burning. She turned the gas up, and stood awaiting the revelation.

Linwood threw himself into a chair, and after staring at her a moment, said:

"You ought to be ashamed to look me in the face; yet you stand there as composedly as if you had been the most faithful of retainers, and had nothing to fear from my wrath."

"I have been faithful to Mrs. Linwood, and—to her family; and I intend to stand by them to the end, let what will happen."

"What do you mean by that? Do you dare to threaten me? When I tell you that I have just come from that Ashford, to whom a child was once sent to be secretly kept, perhaps you will alter your tone."

Judith did not seem so much alarmed as he had expected; she only changed colour a little, and steadily said:

"I cannot say that I am sorry that this has happened, sir. I had little faith in the man after I saw him, and tried to induce Mrs. Linwood to tell you what she had done, but the poor thing was not strong enough. She did try, but you saw the state she fell in when she made the attempt two nights ago."

"Has Mrs. Linwood had any dealings with this creature?"

"Don't speak harshly of your wife, Mr. Linwood; I have urged it upon her whenever I dared; but she always feared that a separation from you would be the result, and you know how dreadful a blow that would be to her. Mr. Ashford wrote to her, and stated so many facts that I went to see him, and paid him a large sum to keep the secret of my mistress for one year. She did not intend to compromise the interests of her niece, but she wanted to have peace between you and her as long as she lives. At her death, all was to be told."

"Upon my word, that would place me in a charming position! When she was safe, I suppose she cared nothing for what might be my fate. Ashford will grind us all to atoms, if he gets us under his heel."

"He cannot do that, sir, unless you stifle the voice of conscience, and refuse to do what is right and just. Did he tell you where Mrs. Russell's daughter now is, and how easy it will be for you to make atonement for the wrong you had attempted to do her?"

"I asked him for nothing beyond the history of how I had been circumvented. Where is the girl now, and what sort of a person is she? Presentable, eh?"

Mrs. Brent smiled triumphantly:

"She's as handsome as Mrs. Linwood was when you married her; and she has been taken care of and educated by the best class of people. I took care of that, sir. I was not going to leave Miss Alice's child with common folks; when I helped to steal her away from Huggins, I took her where she had a right to go, for the old man that owned the Vale was her great-grandfather."

"What! the father of Ashford? Do not tell me that my wife has a drop of his blood in her veins, or I shall never find it in my heart to forgive what she has dared to do regarding that child."

"You misunderstand me, sir. The Vale was the old homestead of the Falconer family; the last owner

of it of that name was the grandfather of your wife's mother, though at the time I took the child away, I did not know what was the connection between the Falconers and the Wentworths."

"What was it? for I am sure I never heard of those people before. Mrs. Wentworth was a Miss Hurst, I believe."

"Yes, sir; she was. Her mother had been disowned on account of an imprudent marriage, and her parents died in extreme poverty. The physician that attended Mr. Hurst in his last illness recommended the destitute girl to Mrs. Wentworth, and she was taken to her house to live."

"Miss Hurst was very pretty and ladylike, and as it was known that her family on both sides was good, she was treated more like a daughter than a dependent. The son fell in love with her, and after much opposition from his parents he married her, and she was the mother of my two young ladies, Miss Elinor and Miss Alice."

"The Vale then became the property of Ashford by purchase, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir; the old gentleman sold the place when he became too infirm to manage it. But I believe he gave the purchase-money back to Ashford's wife at his decease. He had made a vow that nothing belonging to him should ever come into the possession of Mrs. Hurst's descendants."

"Why did Elinor send the child to him? If he had known to whom she belonged, he would have refused to give her shelter, I suppose."

"Miss Elinor could think of no other place where she would be so safe; and she naturally wished to place the child among people on whom she had some claim. We knew that Mr. Falconer was very old, and I was sent to Mr. Whitney to enquire about the way he lived, before any steps were taken to leave her at the Vale. I found out from him that the family there were educated people, and that Ashford's wife was a gentle, tender-hearted woman, who would be likely to do a good part by little Violet."

"I told Mr. Whitney enough of the child's history to induce him to aid me to conceal her, in every way he could."

"Ashford stated that, at the time of his wife's decease, Violet was given up to a lady who wished to adopt her."

"That is the most curious part of the whole story. Mrs. Melrose, the old lady who insisted on having the child, married a Falconer, and her son is related to Violet. She married a second time, and Clement Falconer took the name of his stepfather. When Mrs. Linwood heard of the transfer that had been made, she took pains to learn something of the people her niece had been placed with, and when she found that they were relations of her own, she believed that providence had guided her to the very spot on which it was safest to leave the child."

Linwood bent down his head, and seemed lost in thought a few moments. At length he drearily said:

"It is a terrible complication, and I hardly know which way to turn to save myself from the power of a man who will be an everlasting thorn in my side."

"He will be worse than that, sir; he will take your money, and then sell you to the other party. As soon as Ashford is secure of his reward he will make terms with Miss Violet; and where would you be then sir?"

Linwood writhed in his chair, and angrily said:

"And it is to you, and to my wife, that I am indebted for being placed in such a predicament. I don't know how you dare to face me so coolly, when you know that you have ruined me for ever. If Violet Russell becomes aware of what I have done, she will have no mercy on me."

"There I think you are mistaken, Mr. Linwood. I believe Miss Violet would have more consideration for her aunt than to compromise you in any way. If you listen to me, sir, I think I can point out a way to avoid scandal of any kind. I have thought it all over many times. My plan is this. Write to Mr. Melrose to bring Miss Violet to meet you. State her true name and position, and promise to explain the cause of her being sent away, when you and her are face to face. You can then say that, as yourself and your wife were leaving your native land for many years, and as so young a child was an incumbrance, both she and you thought it best to leave her behind. You wished her to be placed with her kinsman, but knew if she came to old Mr. Falconer as one of his daughter's descendants, she would not be received. Hence the mystery that was observed. The fact that money has been liberally supplied for her expenses, will sustain this statement, and I do not think that Mr. Melrose is a person who will be apt to attribute mean motives to any man."

Linwood listened attentively, and rather gloomily replied:

"You are very shrewd, Mrs. Brent; but the world? How am I to account for her long disappearance?"

"No one need be told that she has not been with

you for many years. By doing what is right, Mr. Linwood, you can fully reinstate yourself in the good opinion of those who have hitherto doubted you. Don't you think my plan is a feasible one?"

"I begin to think it is, and in consideration of the help you give me, I suppose I must condone the treachery you helped to carry out. What was the cause of Mrs. Linwood's attack this evening? You said she had a letter; was there anything about her nice in it?"

"Yes sir; the letter was from the Rev. Mr. Boyle; it was a coloured photograph of Miss Violet, which he had got possession of through Mr. Whitney, that her aunt might know how she looks. If you remember Miss Alice, sir, as no doubt you do, you will at once know that the original of this picture is her daughter. When my mistress saw it she fainted; and when she came to, she was so ill that I sent for the doctor to see her."

"I remember Alice as a fair, pretty, blue-eyed creature, but I never saw her after her unfortunate marriage. Can you get this picture for me? If the girl is to be acknowledged, I wish to see if she is likely to do credit to those related to her."

"I have it in my pocket, sir; for I thought it best to keep it out of Mrs. Linwood's sight after it upset her so completely. These things never do justice to the original; but if Miss Violet is as handsome as that, I, for one, shall be quite satisfied with her looks."

She triumphantly drew forth a small card, on which was a delicately tinted vignette representing a young, fair face, framed in blonde tresses, with a golden chestnut gleam running through them.

Linwood eagerly held it to the light, and examined it carefully. He presently said:

"It is Alice as she might have looked in maturity. She was scarcely fifteen when I remember her, but this face is that of a thoughtful woman. It is very lovely, I admit that; and after seeing it, I think the scale will go down in favour of right and justice."

He stood gazing upon it, evidently charmed with the beauty of the picture, and Mrs. Brent watched him sharply for several moments. She presently gravely said:

"There is one thing, Mr. Linwood, which I wish to understand: How is Mrs. Linwood to fare when you meet again? She cannot bear much."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean this, sir. My mistress is almost at death's door now, and the least agitation will be fatal to her. If you speak harshly or unkindly to her, you will kill her outright. You must pledge me your word not to reproach her for what she did so long ago."

"I promise not to be hard with her, but I must really tell her what I think of her conduct."

Mrs. Brent's eyes lighted up with unusual fire, and she almost sternly said:

"Do so at your peril, sir. If Mrs. Linwood is destroyed by your cruelty, I will be her avenger. I will seek out Mr. Wentworth's heiress, and with the assistance of Mr. Whitney and Mr. Melrose, I will restore her to her own; at the same time I will proclaim to the world the villainy which plotted to defraud her of her birthright. That, sir, is my determination. I have kept back what I knew, for Mrs. Linwood's sake; for she is weak enough to love you in spite of all. Her life is your safeguard, and I would not advise you to tamper with it."

Linwood flushed angrily, but he presently said, with a forced laugh:

"With such a penalty as that threatening me, of course I must be on my good behaviour. I will make an effort to be very civil, Mrs. Brent."

(To be continued.)

FACETIE.

THE word *velocipedestriationalistinarianologist* is the latest addition to the language.

A GENTLEMAN advertises for a horse "for a lady of dark colour, a good trotter, and of stylish action." The horse "must be young, and have a long tail about 15 hands high."

A WASHINGTON correspondent says the coloured cooks at the White House have declined to perform their duties, on account of the appointment of a white steward over them.

A FOREIGNER, speaking of the House of Commons, says: "So difficult is it for anything to be heard inside its gorgeous walls, that the impudent members are obliged to be continually calling out 'Hear, hear, hear!'"

In a certain small provincial town one of the residents, M. A. B., found that his house was rendered both damp and dark by the contiguity of a large tree which was inconveniently near to his windows. He would gladly have had it cut down, but the tree belonged to the commune and was not to be meddled

with. Being a man of resources, he sent for insertion to one of the Paris papers the following paragraph: "There is still in existence one of the trees of liberty of the date of 1793. It may be seen at X, close to the house of M. A. B., and the passers-by reverently uncover their heads to this venerable witness of our grandest struggles and our most illustrious victory." Three days afterwards an order came from the prefecture in Paris for the Mayor of X, to cause the said tree to be cut down—which was accordingly done forthwith.

A SCOTTISH advocate, who in his broad Scotch pronounced the word water, watter, being asked in court by the Chancellor if he spelled water with two's, replied, "No my lord, but I spell manners with two n's."

PATRIOTISM.—Grattan said of Hussey Burgh, who had been a great Liberal, but on getting his silk gown became a Tory, that all men knew silk to be a non-conducting body; and that since the honourable member had been enveloped in silk no spark of patriotism had reached his heart.

MR. BRIGHT'S BEHAVIOUR.

The following story has been in circulation at the clubs *dpropos* of Lord Russell's recent outbreak, and having reference to the time at which he used to coquette socially and personally with Mr. Bright, so many years ago that it may be new to some of our readers. When Mr. Bright was first asked to dine at Chesham-place, he arrived of course in very good time, and so early that he found himself alone in the drawing-room. He was soon joined by Viscount Amberley, then an ingenuous boy, who, after surveying the stranger curiously, put the question: "Are you the Quaker gentleman that was to come to dinner?"

"Yes, my dear," was the reply, "why do you ask?"

"Because," was the innocent rejoinder, "papa and mamma were wondering how you would behave."

"Papa" has now had ample opportunities of discovering how "the Quaker gentleman" would behave, and seems at last to have come to the conclusion that Mr. Bright is a little out of place in an English Cabinet.

WOULDN'T LEAVE.—The landlord of a hotel said to a boarder: "Look o' here! I want you to pay your bill, and you must! I have asked you often enough for it, and I tell you now that you don't leave the house until you have paid it." "Good l'!" said the lodger. "I'll stay with you as long as I live."

SOME of these Mormons have terrific families. I lectured one night by invitation in the Mormon village of Provost, but during the day I rashly gave a leading Mormon an order admitting himself and family. It was before I knew that he was much married; and they filled the room to overflowing. It was a great success, but I didn't get any money.—*Artemus Ward's Lecture.*

AN AMERICAN paper says: "B—B— thinks it provoking for a woman who has been working all day mending her husband's old coat, to find a love-letter from another woman in the pocket." To which a contemporary answers: "Perfect nonsense! There is not a woman under the sun but would find the letter before she began to mend the coat, then it wouldn't be mended at all."

CASH v. CREDIT.—A tavern-keeper in one of the small towns in Wisconsin, employed an old German blacksmith to do a certain job, for which he paid cash. Afterwards a neighbour got a similar job done on credit, for a less price. Upon being asked the reason, the blacksmith replied: "You see, I have too much charge on my book, and I sometimes lose 'em; and zo, ven I have good cash customer I charge a good price; but ven I puts it on my book, I do not like to charge so much; zo, if I never gets 'em, I no loss so much."

ON HIS DIGNITY.—A late bishop being desirous of enlarging his palace, caused an architect to prepare plans of the proposed alterations; but when he came to know the estimated cost of the work, he declined to proceed. "What cheque shall I draw for your fees, sir?" said the bishop to the architect, who told him that as the plans were abandoned, his charge would be a hundred guineas. "A hundred guineas! Why, sir, many of my curates do not get so much in the course of a year." "Possibly," said the other; "but your lordship must remember that I am a bishop among architects."

THE VALUE OF A NOSE.—At Rouen, recently, a gentleman obtained damages of a cabman, from whose cab he had been thrown to the detriment of his nose, half of which had been amputated. The counsel for the defendant admitted that it was very disagreeable to lose one's nose, but argued that the harm done to the plaintiff was not so great as if he had been twenty years of age. Physical beauty at that time of life was priceless, as many a conquest,

many a rich marriage, had been made by a Roman nose. In the plaintiff's case, however, it was very different. He was married, tolerably well off, and had children; neither his wife nor his children would love him any the less. Therefore, the damage done was very insignificant, and could not possibly affect the plaintiff's prospects. The judge seemed to be of the same opinion; 6,000 francs damages were awarded.

A NEGRO, after gazing at the Chinese, exclaimed: "If de white folks is dark as dat out dere, I wonder what's de colour ob de niggers?"

REVOLUTIONS.—"Corry O'Lanuus" has a good joke about the velocipede. He thinks Mexicans ought to be the best riders, because the more revolutions you make the faster you go.

A STORY is told of a young man in Devonshire, who was crossed in love, and attempted suicide lately by taking a dose of yeast powder. He immediately rose above his troubles.

A GENTLEMAN who has made a rock-work, planted with ferns, in the front of his house, near Winchester, has placed up the following notice, and found it efficient: "Beggars beware! Scopendiums and Polydiums are set here."

A WIFE'S TEMPER.—Here's a gentleman's diary of his wife's temper: Monday—a thick fog; no seeing through it. Tuesday—Gloomy and very chilly; unseasonable weather. Wednesday—Frosty, at times sharp. Thursday—Bitter cold in the morning, red sunset, with flying clouds, portending hard weather. Friday—Storm in the morning, with peals of thunder; air clear afterwards. Saturday (pay-day)—Gleams of sunshine, with partial thaw; frost again at night. Sunday—A slight south-wester in the morning; clear and pleasant at dinner-time; hurricane and earthquake at night.

THE Queen, we are told, purposes giving his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales the £5,000, said to have been realised by the sale of her Majesty's "Journal of Our Life in the Highlands." Surely the heir apparent should take wisdom from so excellent an example. Why does he not get up a book—on the Leger? If the prince does adopt the idea, we hope he will give us the credit of having suggested it.—*Tomahawk.*

COMPARISONS.

Barber: "Al's extr'ordinary dry, Sir. (Customer explains he has been in the Country, and out o' doors a good deal.) Ah! jus' so, sir. Ruination to the air, sir! If I was to be knockin' about 'unting and fishin', lor', sir, my 'air wouldn't be in no better state than yours, sir!"—*Punch.*

TO SIGHT-SEEERS.—Lovers of the marvellous may be glad to know that the Metropolis can show something far more wonderful than the Siamese twin brothers—"Seven Sisters' Junction!"—*Punch.*

WANTS PUTTING DOWN.—Is it not sad in these enlightened days of Women's Rights, Women's Lectures, Women's Colleges, Women's Examinations, &c., still to see "Mauds" openly offered for sale at Railway Stations?—*Punch.*

IMPOSING A CHURCH RATE.—The Chairman reporting progress on the Irish Church Bill.—*Will o' the Wisp.*

WHY cannot the President of the Board of Trade and the Chancellor of the Exchequer change places?—Because, although the latter is Low(e), it is impossible for the former to become Lowe(r).—*Will o' the Wisp.*

MORAL TINKERING.

Honourable gentlemen when they have well crammed the statistics of any question concerning the poor, naturally think that they know a great deal about the poor; and so they do, as far as Bumble can teach. But of the habits of life, the imperious need, the urgent necessities not only of those who are known to Bumbleism, but of another and much larger class of the respectable poor in great cities, honourable gentlemen know absolutely nothing. Hence, wherever a bigoted hydropathist, armed with a petition signed by boys "over sixteen years of age," declaims on the evil of drunkenness, Parliament, though not quite blind to the absurdity of the measures proposed, authoritatively declare it high time that something be done. We think so too. It is high time that the poor who get 80 per cent. of water in their milk, should cease to be threatened with the substitution of that invigorating fluid for their necessary beer. Neither honourable members nor great statisticians—we say it with all due respect—are competent judges of the domestic economy of the poor. If the Legislature will interfere, let it be to protect the divided and helpless many from the organised and therefore formidable few. To annoy and insult a thousand well-deserving persons for the hypothetical reformation of half a dozen drunkards, may appear a very small matter to the Temperance and Trumpet League, but it is not policy, it is

not social science, it is mere busy-bodyism and folly. Sir W. Lawson may be "virtuous," and the Government will, of course, redeem its pledge to legislate efficaciously in the matter, but if there is to be "more cakes and ale" it ought to be clearly understood that there shall be no more "cold without" among the poor.—*Will o' the Wisp.*

A COOK'S EXCURSION.—Going to bring the Chops of the Channel to the Gridiron at the docks.—*Punch.*

A MAN OF BUSINESS.

1st City Man: "Just had a very heavy loss, eh? Sorry to hear it. How was it?"

2nd Ditto: "Why, I insured my mother-in-law's life for two thousand—sent her to Scotland by rail—and hang me, if she hasn't come back again safe!"—*Punch.*

BY GUMS!—A dentist advertises "Painless Tooth Extraction." No inducement to us—our painless teeth are far too precious to be parted with.—*Punch.*

WIDOW CLARE.

A CHARMING young widow is Addie Le Clare, Unrivalled in beauty, and rich as she's fair; Her wit is as flashing as gems from the mine, Her smile is so sweet, you would think it divine;

Her soft tones can thrill

A suitor at will;

And naught can compare

With the curls of brown hair

That dance o'er the shoulders of Widow Le Clare.

How lightning-like pulsed the warm blood through my veins,

When first to the widow I gave up the reins!

It seemed as if Fate had my destiny sealed,

And that my young love must now be revealed!

The steeds flew along,

Like a lover's smooth song;

And breathing a prayer,

I glanced at the rare

And bright-flashing eyes of Widow Le Clare.

"Now don't!" said the widow, in the sweet pouting way,

That always means yes, while still saying nay;

"Don't what?" I inquired—half afraid, I confess,

She meant to coquette, in her mock roughness;

"I was always afraid

At a bridge, when a maid;

All the beau would declare

'Twas only their share,

The toll at the bridge!" said the Widow Le Clare.

The hoofs of the bays on the bridge now resound,

While I, with one arm her waist clasping around,

Collected the toll from her lips, cherry-red;

"Please not at each arch!" the arch widow said!

But ah, 'twas too late!

The bridge sealed my fate:

For lo! them and there,

She answered my prayer,

And promised no longer to be Widow Clare!

N. U.

STATISTICS.

MAYNOOTH COLLEGE.—A supplementary return relative to Maynooth College has been published. It contains a list of the trustees of the college from the 5th June, 1795, to the 18th April, 1869. In each year from 1795 to 1800, there were ten lay and eleven ecclesiastical trustees. In each year from 1800 to the present date there have been six lay and eleven ecclesiastical trustees. The Lord Chancellor of Ireland, the Chief Justices of the King's Bench and Common Pleas, and the Chief Baron of the Court of Exchequer in Ireland were trustees from the year 1795 to the year 1800. The following is a list of the trustees in the year 1869:—Earl of Fingall, Viscount Gormanston, Viscount Castlerosse, Lord French, Right Hon. Richard More O'Ferrall, the O'Conor Don, M.P., his Eminence Cardinal Cullen, the Most Rev. Doctor MacHale, Leahy, and Kieran, and the Right Rev. Doctors Walshe (Ossory), Delany, Feeney, Walsh (Kildare), Keane, Kelly, and Leahy.

PENAL SERVITUDE.—A return of the number of previous convictions recorded against persons undergoing sentences of penal servitude on the 31st March, 1869, was recently issued. Of the 1,582 not previously convicted 51 are sentenced for life, 58 for 15 years and upwards, 151 for a period between 10 and 15 years, 330 for a period between 7 and 10 years, 85 for 6 years, 907 for 5 years. Of the 1,176 once previously convicted, 7 are sentenced for life, 22 for 15 years and upwards, 82 for a period between 10 and 15 years, 764 between 7 and 10 years, 89 for 6 years, and 262 for 5 years. Of the 1,095 twice previously convicted 4 for life, 16 for 15 years, 77 between 10 and 15 years, 819 between 7 and 10 years, 23 for 6 years, and 156 for 5 years. Of the 863 three

times previously convicted, 6 for life, 7 for 15 years, 67 between 10 and 15 years, 670 between 7 and 10 years, 15 for 6 years, and 98 for five years. Of the 609 four times previously convicted, 2 for life, 3 for 15 years, 59 between 10 and 15 years, 472 between 7 and 10 years, 11 for 6 years, and 62 for 5 years. Of the 1,595 previously convicted five times and upwards 3 for life, 4 for 15 years, 151 between 10 and 15 years, 1,225 between 7 and 10 years, 86 for 6 years, and 176 for 5 years. The above shows that there were 13 convicted for life, 110 for 15 years and upwards, 587 between 10 and 15 years, 4,280 between 7 and 10 years, 209 for 6 years, and 1,661 for 5 years—giving a total of 6,920 convicts in prisons on the 31st March.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

GARDEN SEEDS.—Garden seeds often fail, from being covered too deeply in the soil. As a general rule, it may be said that the small seeds require a very light covering. The larger seeds, as peas and beans, may be covered more deeply. Many flower seeds fail to germinate from too deep planting. We should learn wisdom from the process of nature. The seeds that drop from the pods of flower stalks, and from weeds and grasses, receive but very slight covering or none at all, and a sufficient number of them germinate from being planted too deeply.

BITES OF INSECTS.—With the approach of summer weather, this subject has a practical interest for medical men and their patients. Linnaeus informs us that the seeds of the *Absinthium maritimum* are deadly to the flea; and we have likewise heard that the odour of the elder is equally obnoxious to other insects. It is said by the devotees of botany, that on a hot summer's day, the cattle may be seen to cluster around the elder for protection against the sting of flies; we have thought sometimes, in our summer rambles, that the verdict of the wise was unproven. We entertain, however, a strong belief that the perfume of the chamomile is destructive of the *Acarus scabiei*; and our Italian contemporary, the *Giornale Italiano delle Malattie della Pelle*, reminds us that the infusion of chamomile flowers has been recommended as a wash to the skin, for the purpose of protection against gnats. Gnats are said to shun the traitorous perfume; and, if such be the case, it would be easy to convert the essential oil of the anethemis into an agreeable lotion like that of lavender-water or eau de Cologne."

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE fashionable season in Paris is now drawing to a close. Five hundred and ninety-five balls have been given during the winter.

It is a strange fact that as yet no sanitary supervision is exercised with respect to the large floating population that live on the Thames between London Bridge and Woolwich.

It is announced in most of the French papers that the principal shops in Paris will henceforth be closed on Sundays. This important social reform is not the result of a religious movement, but has been brought about by the same kind of agency which, in England, has introduced the Saturday half-holiday.

STAMP DUTY ON INDUSTRIAL LIFE POLICIES.—The Chancellor of the Exchequer has intimated that he has "directed that in the Act consolidating the stamp duties, which is in course of preparation, provision shall be made for reducing the duty on policies of 10/- and under to 1d."

PREPAREDNESS are being made for the purpose of ornamentally gilding the various panels in the ceiling of the Central Hall, as also the Peers' Lobby and the House of Commons' Lobby, in the Palace of Westminster. The private entrance for members to the Metropolitan Railway, from the arcade in front of the Speaker's house, is being rapidly proceeded with, and will shortly be available.

HERBE is a pretty little bit of French philosophy. It is set down to the credit of Alexander Dumas, fils:—"Walk two hours every day. Sleep seven hours every night. Get up as soon as you wake. Speak only when necessary, and say only half what you think. Don't write anything but what you can sign. Think neither too much nor too little of money; it is a good servant, but a bad master."

THE clergy have become alarmed at the Budget Tax on male servants. Every minister has a man who brushes his coat and adjusts his bands, and helps on his pulpit vestments on Sunday, and is a factotum, or man of all-work, every day. They very pertinently ask—Why exempt the sheriff of the county and the mayor of the burgh, and not also the minister of the parish?

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

DEESDEN.—You can recover your indentures.

SARINA.—We are obliged for your little contribution.

GEORGE.—Handwriting quite good enough for an office.

ANNE GREEN.—We cannot inform you if the society is solvent or not.

LOUIE.—The words are pronounced "meerenoo" and "arrowfaine."

M. S. A.—We cannot answer your question, as you have not given the name of the ship.

ELINA.—The feminine of improvisatore—one who has the faculty of impromptu verse-making.

R. S.—"Bereaved" and "Ode to the Thames" declined with thanks.

P. Z.—*Les non scripta* means a law, not written, but established by long usage and consent.

AMETHAON.—If you wish to enlist in the regiment you'll name apply to any recruiting sergeant at Whitehall.

MERTLE.—Wash the bottle well with water in which soda has been dissolved.

GEORGE W.—The first London Directory was printed in 1677. The Post Office Directory first appeared in 1800.

DISTRESSED ONE.—Advertise in an Australian newspaper. You can do it through an advertisement agent.

G. W. C.—You will get every information on application at Scotland Yard, Whitehall.

PEGWELL BAY.—Your handwriting is legible enough, but too like a schoolboy's. Practice and take great care.

MAUD CLEMENTS.—We do not know how you can attract the gentleman's attention.

A BROTHER.—It is clearly your duty to receive him after the receipt of the letter. The injury was not so great after all, and he has made ample reparation.

MINNIE.—We think the governess right and you wrong. You are only retardating the progress of your sister by interfering.

LILIAN.—You can hire a canoe at Kew; but we would not advise you to do so unless you have a boat in attendance in case of a capsiz. They are very dangerous.

ETHELWALD.—1. The sentence is quite correct. 2. There are too many flourishes in your handwriting, otherwise it is good.

E. G.—You can sue him in the county court, and recover, if you can prove that the living was so bad that you were obliged to leave.

THOMAS F.—"A Bygone Spring" shows some improvement. Do not be in a hurry though to get into print. You may do better by study and observation.

FAIRLEIGH.—Your temper is too hasty. You are decidedly in the wrong, and are making bad worse by that stupid fault—sulky obstinacy.

METAL-BURE.—Stereotype printing was in use in Holland in the last century, and a quarto Bible and a Dutch folio Bible were printed there. It was revived in London by Wilson in 1804.

INVALID.—Headaches are due to various causes. It may proceed from indigestion, popularly called sick headache, or from fulness of blood in the head. You should avoid hams, and all rich, highly-seasoned dishes.

YOUNG DOCTOR.—We would advise you to take a voyage first, if you have the chance. The young lady will be glad to wait for you, we are sure, when she knows the circumstances.

MARY.—Remove at once. The air is hurtful to you. A good walk to your office will improve your health, and tend to dispel the symptoms. You do not get half enough exercise.

A. B. C.—You would have to apply personally for the licence—the cost is about 21. 10s. One of the parties must reside three weeks in the parish where they are to be married.

PIMLICO.—You are wrong if you take back the servant under any circumstances. The girl was impudent, and if you have her again, she will presume upon your good nature.

LILLIAN F.—Your handwriting is good enough for a governess's situation, but you are sadly defective in spelling. You will require to remedy this before you have much chance.

G. W. C.—1. You are right, and those trying to influence you to the contrary are much to blame. Music Halls are not the places to spend your Saturday evenings in the company of your sweetheart. If you are inclined for healthy excitement and amusement after the toils of

the week, you should go to a theatre in preference. 2. We do not approve of what are called "Sing-songs" as a rule. Better far that this kind of recreation should take place in a private house, and in the presence of the family. There is not so much temptation then for over-indulgence in drink or tobacco.

CONSTANT READER.—As the gun was lent with the knowledge that it was to be disposed of as you have indicated, he cannot annoy you or imprison your husband. Return the article as soon as you are able.

W. WHITE.—1. There is no means by which you can stop your growth. 2. You will very likely get stouter as you get older. 3. We could not recommend the books; there is no advantage to be gained by their study.

R. LEE.—The meaning of the word Theophilanthropists is "lovers of God and man." They were a sect formed in France in 1793, headed by Lepaux, one of the five directors, 1797, and broken up in 1802.

J. D.—1. See answer to "A. B. C." in this number. 2. The clergyman's fee varies; the clerk's is from £1. 6d. upwards. 3. Certainly, there must be two witnesses. 4. No; only by special licence. 5. Handwriting too care-

less.

AN OLD SHIPMASTER'S DAUGHTER.—Your lines about America are commendable, as evidence of a patriotic spirit. We are sorry that they are scarcely up to our standard. "Minnie Mine" is musical, but defective in strength.

RUMOLUS.—The Rubicon was a small river flowing into the Adriatic Sea. It separated Cisalpine Gaul from Italy proper. Roman generals were forbidden to pass this river at the head of an army. Julius Caesar did so 49 B.C., and thereby began a revolt and deadly civil war.

JADER.—1. The lines are Spenser's, and should run thus:

Sleep after toil, port after stormy seas;

Ease after war, death after life doth greatly please."

2. Robert Browning's "In a Gondola." 3. You can get the book in the British Museum, if you have a reading ticket.

AN ANXIOUS SON.—Under the circumstances your duty is clear. Remain with your mother till your brothers have finished schooling and are able to do for themselves. If you explain to your employers the reason why you wish to decline the appointment, they will appreciate it, and advance your interest in another way. You may be certain that you will not lose by what at first sight may seem a sacrifice.

WAITING.

Oh, whisp'ring wind, oh, murmur'ring brooklets, say,

O'erlook ye one that was to come your way,

Like you, a wanderer from yo' heathery hill-tops gray?

Long nursing fond expectancy so dear,

Hope feeds on hope, till all are eaten near,

Save the last cannibal, we may christen Fear.

Will she not come, whose absence makes a void

Within my soul, so fathomless and wide,

The sea and the great earth are small indeed beside?

Thought treads on thought the mind's vast compass

round,

To find an excuse, nowhere to be found:

Dim, doleful eyes of mine are drenched with tears and

drowned.

Yet even now, were she to tread this grove,

And I all this to be her fault could prove,

I could forgive her all, so lenient is Love.

And I could cancel each accusing thought

I now record against her, as I ought,

In characters on tablet of my mem'ry wrought.

Ah, yes! my heart a merrier tone would wake,

And bush and tree diviner aspect take,

Were she to come—such change her presence here would

tend to be branded on the shoulders and imprisoned for life. She made her escape and came to London, where she was killed by falling from a window-sill, in attempting to escape an arrest for debt.

EMILY and ANNIE.—"Emily," seventeen, petite, fair, light blue eyes, brown hair, and good tempered. "Annie," twenty-two, dark hair and eyes, and amiable.

BRUNETTE (a widow), thirty-three, tall, and in business for herself. Respondent must be tall, fair, and in good circumstances.

BUTTERCUP and DAISY.—"Buttercup," twenty-six, "Daisy," twenty-four. Respondents must be respectable, industrious, and fond of home.

LIZZIE E., seventeen, medium height, hazel eyes, brown hair, and of a lively disposition. Respondent must be tall and handsome; one in the Navy preferred.

R. STANLEY (a widower), twenty-eight and very dark. Respondent must be of medium height, not over thirty-two, have a little money, and be willing to emigrate.

ALFRED Y., twenty-one, medium height, and good looking. Respondent must be good looking, well educated, and about his own age.

WALTER, twenty-one, dark, fond of home, and in a good position. Respondent must be well educated, respectable, and not over twenty-one. Would exchange *cartes de visite*.

WIDOW, twenty-five, musical, accomplished, domesticated, and will have money. Respondent must be over thirty and in a good position. Would exchange *cartes de visite*.

JESSIE J., seventeen, brown hair and eyes, and of medium height. Respondent must be tall, dark, handsome, good tempered, fond of home, and from twenty to thirty years of age.

LINA, eighteen, tall, fair, violet eyes, good looking, and will have 5,000/- on her twenty-first birthday. Respondent must be tall, dark, handsome, and be a gentleman; money no object. *Cartes de visite* to be exchanged.

ST. LEON, twenty-three, 5 ft. 5 in., fair, good looking, well educated, affectionate, and holds a good position in New Zealand. Respondent must be amiable, industrious, and having a few pounds.

HARRY F. P., eighteen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, considered good looking, fond of home, and in easy circumstances. Respondent must be about seventeen, good looking and amiable.

EMMIE and KATIE.—"Emmie," eighteen, petite, golden hair, blue eyes and affectionate. Respondent must be tall, dark, fond of home, and about twenty-five. "Katie," seventeen, tall, slight, brown hair, dark grey eyes, and amiable. Respondent must be affectionate, and not under twenty-five.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

MARK T. is responded to by—"A Tradesman's Daughter, eighteen, tall, and good looking. Would like *carte de visite*.

J. V. J. by—"A Lonely One," tall, dark, good tempered, and fond of home. Would like to exchange *cartes de visite*.

J. C. S. by—"Tibatha," twenty-two, medium height, and dark.

G. CLARK by—"C. P.," nineteen, medium height, and rather dark.

M. W. by—"J. J.," twenty-seven, 5 ft. 8 in., dark, good looking, and in easy circumstances.

VIOLET by—"P. G.," twenty-seven, 5 ft. 8 in., fair, good looking, and in a good position.

P. by—"Mabel," twenty, tall, fair, blue eyes, rather good looking, and respectable.

GIFSY by—"E. S." (a solicitor), thirty-two, tall and dark. Would like to exchange *cartes de visite*.

EMILY T. by—"Bonivard," twenty-four, 5 ft. 8 in., blue eyes, auburn hair, whiskers and moustache, good tempered, and has 90/- a year.

JAMES M. D. by—"Carry D.," nineteen, tall and fair.

VIVIAN by—"Jennie Shrewsbury," twenty, 5 ft. 8 in., dark brown hair, hazel eyes, fond of music and home, and thoroughly domesticated. Would exchange *cartes de visite*.

ALPHA by—"A Constant Reader," fair, brown hair, ladylike, fond of music and home. Would exchange *cartes de visite*.

LUCIE H. by—"Ally" (a Swiss), about thirty, 5 ft. 8 in., good looking; is a Roman Catholic, in a good position, with excellent prospects. Would like *cartes de visite*.

ROSE and JESSIE by—"Melham and Lawrence," both in good positions, handsome, affectionate, and fond of home. Would like to exchange *cartes de visite*.

Rose by—"John S.," a commercial traveller.

JESSIE by—"A Scotch Solicitor," twenty-five, 5 ft. 8 in., steady and fond of home. Would exchange *cartes de visite*.

DAISY M. by—"W.," twenty-one, dark, good looking, and in business for himself. —"C. M. W.," twenty, in a good position, and when of age will have 950/-, and —"W. Howard," twenty-one, 5 ft. 4 in., good looking, fond of music, and in a good situation.

LOWLY CARRIE by—"K.," twenty-five, 5 ft. 6 in., fair, and has money; —"Julius," twenty-six, good looking, and a gentleman by birth and position; and —"H. S. J.," tall, good looking, and in a good position. Would like *cartes de visite*.

ELLEN C. by—"B.," twenty-six, 5 ft. 7 in., fair, and has money; and —"H. S. J.," tall, good looking, and in a good position. Would like *cartes de visite*.

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